

Insect Armageddon

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I've been thinking about insect armageddon a bit over the last few days. With one of these rare very hot summers (by that I mean no rain and consistent sunny days) I have been out in the garden a lot. There has been a lot of talk of [insect armageddon](#) over the last year or so. As more flowers have come out (and due to the very long cold winter many are late) I've been examining the insect population. Or rather lack of it. Earlier on in the year bumblebees were out on my thistle (below) which they love.



To be fair the plant is past its best but insects there are none. Another plant they love is the sage. This year its noticeably had less flowers, but also very few bees visiting. Another herb they love is oregano. Bees and hoverflies fight over the small mauve flowers. This years visitors are almost absent although the flowers have only just come out. Encouragingly there were two honeybees on the flowers earlier. Its really rare to see a honeybee at all. Its not just bees but hoverflies, flies and the irritating midges that live in the vegetable patch and only bite you under your clothes and you don't notice the bites for 24 hours are also in low numbers. There are very few social wasps, I have yet to see any solitary bees or many of the more unusual social wasps or parasitic wasps. When we went to the highlands in the first week of June there were myriad insects of all sizes and types where we were staying but few elsewhere. Our car had few insects on its number plate something that has continued since and was noticeable last year. Another strange thing is that both my neighbours had bumble bee nests along my boundary. Both have disappeared something I found in the past when I had a nest on my compost heap. Logically I would expect them to last out the whole summer. This is all anecdotal but does suggest a drop in numbers. This has very serious implications for the natural world and for us. We need these pollinators. I'm hoping that the strange weather we went straight from winter to summer may have something to do with it and next year numbers will recover. However I fear its pollution and climate change. Neil

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