

One thing we have learnt this week- pollinator losses

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[honey bee in oregano 2018](#) uploads/2018/07/honey-bee-in-oregano-2018-11-11-14872

A paper has come out this week on UK pollinator losses. This paper does not directly look at numbers, but instead looks at range an habitat. The study was based on the work of volunteers between 1980 to 2013. The implication of the study is that there has been a catastrophic loss of species from the sites studied over this time. 353 different types of insects have disappeared from these sites with just 10% expanding their range. This does not mean the insects concerned are extinct yet. It does mean that they are in retreat. The reasons are quite clear, climate change and the use of pesticides. The danger from all this is 75% of all our crops are pollinated by insects. Even some kinds of self fertile crops do better with pollination. Unfortunately the pollinator losses study does chime with what I saw in the garden last year. The weather was particularly strange last spring but there was a noticeably lower number of insects last summer. The only increase I saw was in honey bees visiting my oregano. We had lower numbers of some of the more unusual types of parasitic insects and wasps. One solution as I have seen it and I hope its still correct is to use gardens as places protected from pesticide use. Hopefully these reservoirs would protect numbers. I would encourage all readers to not use pesticides to any great extent and to plant insect friendly plants. Neil

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