



Operation Pollinator is creating new habitats for struggling populations of bumblebees and native pollinating insects. It is proving to be the golf and amenity industries' positive action to put back essential food and nesting resources – and the opportunity to help save bees.

Not only does Operation Pollinator create the chance to enhance biodiversity and add interest for golfers playing in a natural environment, it can also be a positive attraction for new players to the course and a chance to engage with the local community in the drive to develop truly sustainable business and future success for the club.



Bob Taylor, Head of Ecology at STRI, provides his Top Ten tips to successfully create an Operation Pollinator area, and how to get the best out of it for the club.



Seed selection



- Select a mix of flower species that will give a prolonged source of pollen and nectar through three seasons. This is important for pollinators and other insects to complete their life cycle, as well as providing extended visual interest for players.
- Choose wildflowers that are not overly competitive. Avoid rare species as these are expensive and not suitable for the intended purpose. Importantly, the plants selected will need to fit in with existing habitat conditions to appear natural to the golfers and the general public.
- Refer to the Operation Pollinator guide that includes suggested seed mixes and sources for a range of typical golf course situations – including parkland, heathland and links courses. These have been especially selected to provide suitable pollen and nectar sources for the species of bumblebees and other pollinating insects likely to be found in the areas.
- If you are sowing into an existing grass sward, use a wildflower only seed mix - no additional grasses will be required. If sowing into a bare seedbed, only include Fescue grass species at a low seed rate in the wildflower mix, to avoid competition and create a fine wispy effect.

The Magnificent Seven

Wildflower species that are attractive to a range of bumblebees and pollinating insects, are relatively easy to establish and provide a long season of nectar and colour. They should be included in most Operation Pollinator seed mixes.



Birdsfoot Trefoil Black Knapweed Field Scabious Lady's Bedstraw Selfheal Wild Carrot Wild Red Clover

Other wildflower species may be added to mixes according to site specific requirements and soil types. www.wildseed.co.uk

Pictures: Emorsgate Seeds ©

Visit www.greencast.co.uk for a full Operation Pollinator wildflower ID guide

Establishment technique



- Identify areas of poor grassland, with little existing wildflower interest. Plan the operation to allow one month preparation time before the intended seeding date – ideally in early spring or autumn.
- Start by cutting the grassland back to 50mm as soon as ground conditions allow. Remove all clippings to reduce fertility and leave a clean surface.
- If you are using Rescue to control coarse grasses in the sward, allow one to two weeks following scarification for turf to recover and green up before treatment. Aim to target applications on the worst affected areas or use a spot treatment. Allow the herbicide to take effect for 14 days, before continuing with the scarification.



- Scarify the area aggressively to thin and create gaps within the base of the turf. Aim to create 40-60% bare ground and ensure all litter is removed as part of this process.
- Sow the seed at the recommended rate, typically around three gm/2. At these rates the seed will need to be bulked with sand to enable even cover. Broadcast by hand with two or three passes has proven to be the most reliable technique on relatively small areas.
- Ensure that the seed is lightly brushed into the scarification grooves but take care not to bury the seed - seed should not be covered.

For further information and to download the Operation Pollinator guidelines visit the GreenCast website or www.operationpollinator.com/golf

You can sign up to join Operation Pollinator now and gain access to a wealth of resources to help implement environmental initiatives on your course.

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