

Aviva's Home Turf

A Biodiversity Guide for Children



What is

Biodiversity?

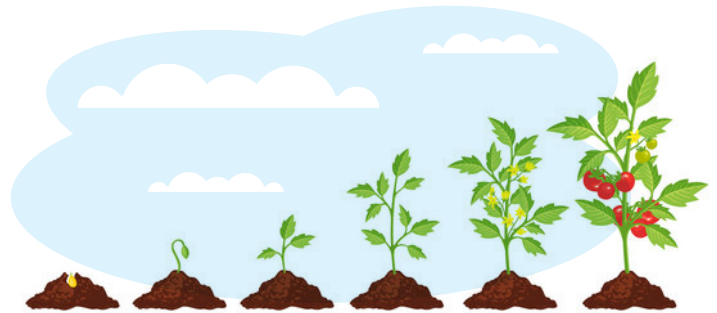
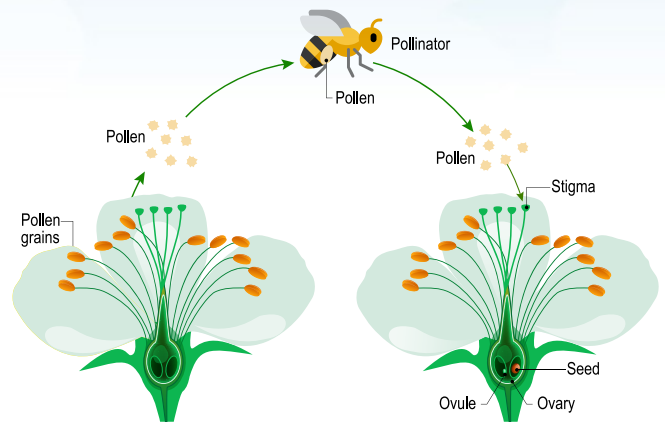
Biodiversity is the variety of life on earth, including all of us. It includes animals, plants and all the other lifeforms which depend on each other to survive.

There is a vast array of natural life on planet Earth ranging from microscopic lifeforms, like bacteria, all the way up to the huge whales that live in our oceans.

Each of these species and organisms work together in ecosystems, like an intricate web, to maintain balance and support life.

Why does Biodiversity matter?

Every lifeform on Earth plays a role in creating the delicate balance that allows us to exist. Trees help to keep the air we breathe clean, bees and other pollinators help our crops to grow, lots of our medicines come from plants and fungi not to mention the increase in our mental wellbeing from connecting with nature.



What's happening to Biodiversity?

We hear lots about the climate crisis and rising temperatures, but we must also consider the impacts of human behaviour on the nature all around us. The way many of us live our lives is disrupting the delicate balance created by nature over millions of years.

Deforestation, intensive farming methods, increased pollution, overfishing, mining and the burning of fossil fuels are just some of the ways we are negatively impacting biodiversity around the globe.



While some species are able to adapt to these changes, many others are really struggling, with some on the verge of extinction. The rate and scale we're losing species is unprecedented and goes way beyond the usually slow and natural evolution of life on earth. One million species are at risk of extinction in the coming decades – a rate tens to hundreds of times higher than the average over the past 10 million years.

What happens if we continue to lose biodiversity?

Biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse have been listed as one of the top five threats humanity will face in the next ten years, so that means unless we stop it we could face our own extinction as well as millions of other species. But it's not too late, there is time to reverse the damage which has been done.



What can we do about it?

The good news is, we have the power to change things. This is a global problem and there is a real opportunity for countries around the world to unite in their ambition to begin to halt the decline in biodiversity.

If the proposed targets, such as 30% of the land and sea being protected by 2030, are agreed, it will be a huge step in the right direction in helping nature recover.

You can make a difference too by considering nature, such as planting flowers and shrubs at home to give wildlife food and shelter or making changes to your diet to help to transform our land use around the globe.

Reconnecting with nature and encouraging others to do the same can help people to learn more about local ecosystems, respect them and treasure them.



“Biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse have been listed as one of the top five threats humanity will face in the next ten years”.



What can we do about it?

Continued

We can also have an impact through what we buy and use in our day to day lives. Certain products such as cotton have a disproportionate effect on biodiversity. There is also overconsumption of high environmental footprint meat, especially beef, in many parts of the world. Those with savings and pensions can choose to invest in ways that promote rather than harm biodiversity with companies, like Aviva, ensuring that money is invested in ways that will have a positive impact on nature and the environment.

Reducing what we waste and throw away can play a part in lowering pollution levels.

- Try not to waste food, which also contributes to between 8-10% of overall greenhouse gas emissions
- Repair items rather than replacing
- Get out of the throw away mentality associated with 'fast fashion' and get more wear out of your clothes

Spending more time in nature can help improve our relationship with it and attach greater value to the habitats around us. Educate your family and friends about wildlife and local ecosystems which can help to bring about long-term behavioural changes.



“Around 50,000 native Irish honey bees live in a hive, so that’s around 250,000 Aviva bees!”

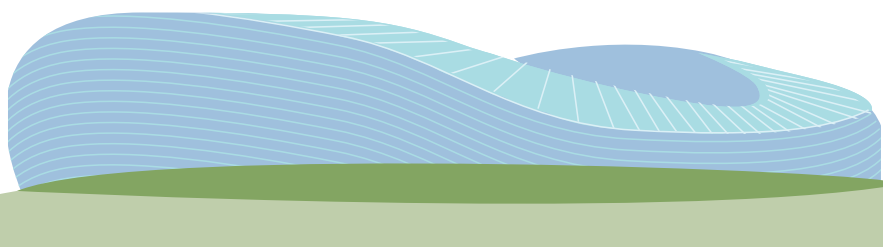
Aviva’s Home turf

At Aviva, we care about biodiversity too.

We have installed beehives on the roofs of two of our office buildings. With five hives across both locations, that’s around 250,000 bees! In these hives live native Irish honeybees, which are dark in colour and have adapted to the unpredictable weather we have in Ireland.



We have developed this pack to celebrate the launch of ‘Aviva’s Home Turf’, the brand new community garden at Aviva Stadium, which you can now visit any day of the year. This garden has incorporated lots of things that you learned in this pack. Check out how to get there below.



The All Ireland Pollinator Plan

In Ireland, one third of our bee species is threatened with extinction.

This is because we have drastically reduced the amount of food and safe nesting sites in our landscapes.

Lots of businesses, like Aviva, have installed beehives around their offices but it is important that we create the necessary conditions to support them too.

You might have seen signs up in your local area in support of the All Ireland Pollinator plan, with some beautiful sites managed for local wildlife.



“In Ireland, one third of our bee species is threatened with extinction”

Checklist of ways to support biodiversity



Make some space for plants

Plant some native plant seeds somewhere that will have a chance to thrive. Flowers and plants native to Ireland will help to support bees and insects as a source of food. Reducing how much you mow the lawn can also really help biodiversity to flourish.



Just add water

Water is a nature magnet like nothing else. You don't need lots of space. Even the smallest pond water feature can be a haven for the wildlife on your doorstep.



Bug Hotel

You can build a hotel for bugs that can be as simple as a pile of old leaves or sticks. By bundling them together in a quiet corner the pile will feed and shelter all sorts of wildlife and eventually make great soil that can be used for planting.



Food for thought

It's all about giving wildlife a helping hand by putting out food, such as seeds for birds. And if you are lucky enough to have the right kind of patch, you may even be able to help your hedgehogs too.



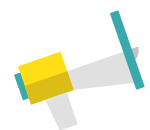
Ditch the chemicals

Try to avoid using chemicals in your garden and look for easy ways to solve your pest problems that don't need pesticides. Be patient and try to learn to tolerate some pests and damage. By avoiding pesticides, you'll save plenty of time, money and wildlife in the long run.



Spread the word

Share these hints and tips with family and friends. You don't need a big space to make a big impact and help to improve biodiversity in your area.



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