**Insects Matter**

The advocacy organization *Population Matters* seeks “to create a sustainable future for all, through positive, voluntary solutions that people freely choose and which improve their lives.” Its primary concern is human population, but the organization asserts that “a sustainable future for all” requires protecting insect populations as well as stabilizing human population.

In an article entitled “Insect Populations Matter” the organization recommends these local actions by “individuals, families, and communities

**Allow your lawn, or a section of it, to grow** until the autumn. This will allow wildflowers to take hold. A bonus is that it doesn’t cost anything!

**Sow native wildflowers yourself** by buying wildflower seed mixes. In some countries, cornfield annuals like red poppies, blue cornflowers, foxgloves and ox-eye daisies are great for pollinators.

**Plant local native flowers and other plants**that suit where you live (e.g., in a city, by the coast or in a woodland). Make sure the range of plants benefits different kinds of insects, not just pollinators.

**In autumn, leave leaf litter on the soil** rather than raking it up as it provides vital habitat and food for insects and other invertebrates like worms. For example, butterfly and moth caterpillars spend the winter in leaf litter, pupating there before emerging in the spring. (Leaves also form a natural mulch that suppresses weeds and fertilizes the soil).

**Create a deadwood habitat**. Insects and other invertebrates need dead wood and use it in many different ways. Deadwood habitats only require a few stacked logs.  Also, a pile of stones or rocks creates a great habitat for insects.

**Put away the spray**. Pesticides, designed to kill insects and other bugs, are often indiscriminate in their action, harming both their target species and others that happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time.

**Buy home-grown plants** rather than plants from abroad for your garden or home. This helps to prevent invasive species reaching your garden and the countryside.

**Lobby your local council, along with others in your community, to manage spaces in your locality for insects and other wildlife**. This could include asking that things like roundabouts, road verges, sections of parks, hospital grounds and cemeteries be allowed to grow wild, at least for the spring and summer months.

**These eco-choice suggestions challenge us to widen our compassion.**

*Insect Populations Matter*, <https://populationmatters.org/insect-populations-matter>.