



The Federation of Irish Beekeepers' Associations
(Comhnascadh Cumann Beachairí na hÉireann)

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Submission to Public Consultation Process on Burning and Hedge cutting Controls

Dear Sir/Madam,

We thank you for the opportunity to submit our views as an organisation which considers itself an interested party in encouraging practices for the preservation and management of the natural environment of Ireland. Not only in the case of honeybees (*Apis Mellifera*) but with equal consideration of the part that other pollinating insects and species including birds play in the overall balance and structure of our landscape.

In the process of preparing for this submission, it was heartening to find many positive views from other organisations and focus groups which espouse the needs of good management and maintenance practice for the purpose of creating healthy hedgerows.

The widest diversity of native wild flower and flowering trees and bushes is seen as key not only to encouraging and sustaining pollinators by providing food sources throughout the growing season, with early and late flowering species being particularly important for the increasing populations from Spring and to have these insect species and birds as well catered for as possible going into the more sparse dormant Winter period. We would therefore argue against any reduction in the current closed period.

Wild flowers for bees

Biodiversity and the health of bees was addressed at the recent Teagasc Crops and Spraying 2014 Open Day with Catherine Keena, Teagasc Environmental Specialist. It was highlighted that there are many different species of bees and that growing wild flower mixes on tillage farms can help the survival of these species and other biodiversity

http://www.teagasc.ie/publications/2014/3239/TResearch_Summer2014.pdf

From research to action: enhancing crop yield through wild pollinators

Recent evidence highlights the value of wild-insect species richness and abundance for crop pollination worldwide.

<http://nature.berkeley.edu/kremenlab/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Enhancing-crop-yield-through-wild-pollinators.pdf>

The above are just a couple of examples where the findings could act as an encouragement to farming landowners to implement practices which encourage wild flower growth and to maintain their hedgerows by best practice with a couple of reference to this as follows:-

Summary Guidelines for hedgerow trimming to benefit wildlife.

- Trim hedgerows in rotation, so that some areas are always left uncut
- Aim to trim a hedge every three years
- Aim for a triangular 'A' shape and allow the top to grow as high as possible
- Aim to trim in late winter (January/February) so that vital nuts and berries are available as food for wildlife in the autumn
- Try to avoid spray drift and fertiliser from reaching the hedgerow - leave a 1.5m margin between crop or pasture and hedgerow
- Leave some trees to grow to full height

http://www.longfordlibrary.ie/lib_her_inside.aspx?id=13918

Or as outlined in the document on

Conserving Hedgerows (2002)

This publication provides information on planting and maintaining hedgerows, threats to hedgerows and the role of local authorities.

http://www.heritagecouncil.ie/fileadmin/user_upload/Publications/Wildlife/hedge.pdf

Finally we would like to wish the Consultation group the very best for their review task ahead and if there is anything further we can help with please do not to hesitate to contact us.

Yours faithfully,

Stuart Hayes,

Secretary, FIBKA