
FarmBioNet Spring Newsletter

From FarmBioNet - Teagasc <FarmBioNet@teagasc.ie>

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To FarmBioNet <FarmBioNet@teagasc.ie>



Update from the Project Team

FarmBioNet has been active for over a year, and we would like to thank all our National Network members for sharing their knowledge and expertise and contributing to our research. Across the FarmBioNet thematic network two surveys were completed by 490 participants and a total of 24 workshops were conducted.

Following a busy year of data collection, we are looking forward to sharing the results with you in our next workshops (details below). The presentation of results will be followed by a hands-on demonstration of planting a hedge and a propagation demonstration.

Join us for the third FarmBioNet's workshop on the McCall's Farm in Co Kildare.

Where: McCall's farm, Calverstown, Kildare

When: 25th of March 2026, 10am –3pm

On the same day we will introduce the [SAFER](#) (Strengthening Agricultural landscape multiFunctionality through expansion of agroecological farming in EuRope) project. Send an email to FarmBioNet@teagasc.ie if you would like to attend. Places will be reserved on a first come first served basis and National Network Members will be prioritised as attendees.





Save the date

FarmBioNet results dissemination and biodiversity-friendly farming practice demonstration.

Introduction to SAFER project and benefits of nature for farming discussion.

When: Wednesday 25th March 2026 (10am - 3pm)

Where: McCall's Farm, Calverstown, Co. Kildare

If you are planning to attend please RSVP:
farmbionet@teagasc.ie



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
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Actions for Biodiversity on the Farm

Bee hotel

Now is the perfect time to **build a bee hotel**. These provide homes for cavity-nesting solitary bees and other insects too. And the best part is they're really easy to make and with a bit of luck you'll get to watch the hotels be colonised with leafcutter and mason bees. You can find a great how-to guide [here](#) and see some nice examples below, pictured (right) is the red mason bee (*Osmia bicornis*).



Photo credit: Colm O'Leary.

Bee scrape

Now is also a great time to **clean up any bee scrapes** you may have made last year. You can do this by removing any vegetation that has grown by scraping the area back to bare

soil.

Don't mow, let it grow!

While it can be tempting to get the lawnmower or strimmer out as the ground begins to dry up, early flowering species such as dandelion, daisy and lesser celandine are vital resources for early emerging pollinators when other sources of pollen are scarce.

Upcoming Farmland Biodiversity Events

National Biodiversity Week (15th – 24th of May)

Several events centred on biodiversity will take place during the week of May 16th to 25th as part of the National Biodiversity Week organised by the Irish Environmental Network (IEN). Check out the different events at: <https://biodiversityweek.ie/>.



Teagasc Johnstown Castle Open Day 2026 (June 10th)

Come meet the FarmBioNet team at the Teagasc Johnstown Castle Open Day, where we'll be sharing insights on supporting biodiversity on your farm. We'd love to chat, answer your questions, and hear about the great work you're doing for farmland biodiversity!



Farming for Nature Festival 2026 (June 23rd)

With the slogan “Where Farming, Nature and Food Come Together”, the Farming for Nature Festival will take place at Ballykilcavan Brewery, Stradbally, Co. Laois. You can book your tickets [here](#). The FarmBioNet team will see you there.



Biodiversity in Plain Sight

Bee on the Lookout for Bumblebee Queens

With a long-anticipated break from the rain, you should be able to spot some emerging bumblebee queens. Queens are much larger than worker bumblebees and you will likely see them foraging on early flowering plants like whitethorn, willows and primroses to regain their strength. They will also be searching for new nests so try to leave areas of tussocky grass and piles of leaves undisturbed. You can learn how to identify and record common bumblebee species [here](#).

Other natural wonders to spot in March

Ashy mining bees (*Andrena cineraria*) are one of the earliest emerging mining bees and are quite distinctive. You can one see below (left) foraging on **dandelion (*Taraxacum agg.*)**, an important food resource for pollinators.



Photo credit: Claudia Barry.

Songbirds will become a lot more vocal as they prepare for the breeding season. You'll likely hear **song thrush** (*Turdus philomelos*), **blackbirds** (*Turdus merula*) and a variety of others including the **long-tailed tit** (*Aegithalos caudatus*) pictured above (right). This is a friendly reminder not to cut hedges between March 1st and August 31st to avoid disturbing nesting birds.

Primrose (*primula vulgaris*) are a common sight along hedgerows and roadways providing an early source of pollen and nectar for pollinators. **Gorse** (*Ulex europaeus*), also known as **furze** or **whin**, flower almost year-round, providing an early food resource for pollinators. The flowers even smell like coconut, just be careful of the spines if you're going for a whiff!

Further Reading

While the FarmBioNet team is working in the background to produce training materials based on the results produced from our events up to date, you can find blogs in the FarmBioNet website and short articles in Teagasc T-daily.

FarmBioNet Newsroom

In the FarmBioNet Newsroom you will find project updates as well as blog posts on biodiversity and other related topics. Access the full list at: <https://farmbionet.eu/newsroom/>.

Teagasc T-daily

Any time the Irish Farming and Biodiversity National Network has hosted or taken part in an event, we have published a short article within Teagasc T-daily. You can find all the articles published up to date below:

[Farmer-focussed Biodiversity and Agricultural Knowledge Network](#)

[Boosting Biodiversity: The FarmBioNet Project Kicks-off](#)

[FarmBioNet workshop brings farmers together to share biodiversity knowledge](#)

[Biodiversity and productivity can go hand in hand](#)

[Insights from FarmBioNet's second workshop](#)

[Exploring a new BASELINE for Irish agriculture](#)

Additional Resources

If you want to find out more about the project, please check out our website <https://farmbionet.eu/>. And make sure to follow us on [Linkedin](#).

The Farming for Nature Handbook is a practical resource for farmers looking to boost biodiversity and build resilience. From meadow management to soil health, it's full of real-world, biodiversity-friendly farming practices that work with the land—not against it. For more information about Farming for Nature and the handbook you can visit farmingfornature.ie.

The National Biodiversity Data Centre host a variety of [workshops](#) and free online [training courses](#) on a wide range of topics from managing hedgerows for biodiversity to identifying farmland birds, bees and butterflies. You can also keep an eye on [The Hare's Corner](#) and [Farming for Nature](#) websites for upcoming events and workshops.

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