



The Flùr Sanctuary Snapshot

Ten unhurried minutes with the bees & butterflies (and more)

A free field sheet from Flùr, for anyone with a patch of flowers in Aotearoa New Zealand · flur.co.nz/sanctuaries

Welcome

Flùr is Gaelic for flower and meadow. This sheet is a small excuse to step outside, sit a while and find out who has been visiting your flowers. You don't need any expertise, just something warm to drink, a comfortable spot and a little patience. It's free for everyone, whether you have a garden, a balcony, a school ground, a marae or a group outing. Everyone follows the same simple steps, so it works just as well for one person on a sunny morning as for a class or group counting together.

Before you begin

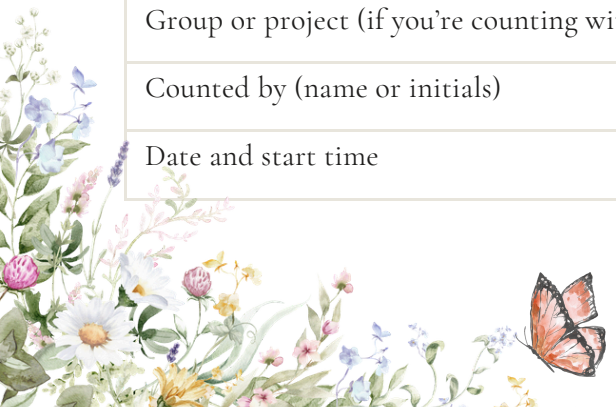
Choose your **watch patch**: one clump of flowers, about 50 × 50 centimetres. Koromiko (hebe), mānuka, kānuka, clover, lavender, borage or a herb in flower all work. Watch the same flower clump each time, and mark the patch with four sticks or a string square if you like. Native bees usually forage within about 100 metres of their nests, so what lands on your patch tells you about your own space.

Pick a dry, daylight moment with light wind, when it's at least 13°C in the sun or 15°C if it's cloudy. Any season works, but in cooler regions winter is often too chilly, so wait for a warm, still day or skip it. Insects stay home when it's cold, wet or blowy, and that's not a failure, just a quiet day.

Fill in what helps you. The group and name boxes are only for when you're counting with others.



Name your patch (the bees already have)	
Garden or sanctuary name (if you have one)	
Town or region	
Group or project (if you're counting with one)	
Counted by (name or initials)	
Date and start time	



Sky	☐ Sunny ☐ Part cloud ☐ Overcast ☐
Wind	Still ☐ Breezy ☐ Blowy
Flowers I'm watching	_____
Roughly how many flowers in my patch	_____
Your spotting experience	☐ Brand new ☐ Some ☐ Keen

The ten minutes

1. **Settle in** a step or two from your patch, close enough to see the flowers clearly. Pour something warm and start a 10-minute timer.
2. **Keep still and watch only the flowers in your patch.** Count every insect that lands on them. Ignore anything that just flies past, and any other flowers outside the patch.
3. **Tally by group** in the table below, one mark each time an insect lands. Do your best to count each individual only once, and don't worry if you're not certain. An honest count is all that is needed.
4. **If you can't tell what it is,** put it under "Other insects".
5. **When the timer sings, stop.** Even if a butterfly arrives at minute eleven. It will keep for next time.

Is it the same bee? If a bee stays and moves between flowers in your patch, that's one bee. If it flies off and a different-looking one arrives, that's two. If you really can't tell, go with your best guess.
Quick trick: two wings means a fly in a clever costume, four wings means a bee or wasp. Our native bees are tiny, dark and quick, so a small dark speck zipping in and out may well be one. You don't need species names.

Insect group	How to spot them	Tally marks	Total
Native bees (ngaro huruhuru)	Smaller than a honeybee (4–12 mm), black or dark green and very quick. Some are slim with yellow face markings		
Honeybees (pī)	Golden-brown and tidy, with pollen baskets on their hind legs		
Bumblebees	Big, round and fuzzy (an introduced bee but so lovable)		

Insect group	How to spot them	Tally marks	Total
Hoverflies	Bee costumes, hovering mid-air, two wings		
Other flies	Everything else with two wings. Flies are pollinators too		
Wasps	Slim waists, shiny, not fuzzy. Paper wasps and German or common wasps are introduced, so give them space		
Butterflies and moths (pūrerehua)	Wings that fold up or flutter open		
Beetles (tātaka)	Hard wing cases, ambling about		
Other insects	Anything you can't place		
All insects			

The visitor who surprised me most: _____

Photo if you can! Little spotters, draw it here instead.

Also seen nearby (just tick, no counting):

□ Birds, like tūī, bellbird (korimako) and silvereye (tauhou) □ Lizards (mokomoko) Dragonflies (kapokapowai) or damselflies □ Butterflies (pūrerehua) flying past ☐ Something else: _____ ☐

Your space's habitat

Tick what's true today.

□ Spray-free: no synthetic or organic-approved sprays

□ Something in flower in every season, or nearly

□ At least one native plant that pollinators love, like koromiko (hebe), mānuka, kānuka or pōhutukawa (NZ Christmas tree)

□ Flowers of different shapes: flat daisies, little tubes, fluffy clusters

□ A patch of bare, sunny, undisturbed soil (most of our native bees nest in the ground, so tread lightly around little clusters of holes)

□ Long grass, leaf litter or a pile of sticks left alone



☐ Fresh water, even a shallow dish with pebbles for landing

☐ Shrubs or trees for shelter from the wind

☐ Lawn allowed to flower, or one unmown corner

☐ Hollow stems, dead twigs or old logs left standing (some native bees nest in them)

Habitat ticks: ____ / 10 **Insect groups on my flowers:** ____ **All insects counted:** ____

Reading your Snapshot



There is no pass or fail. A quiet Snapshot is still a true one, and it tells you what to plant next.

- **Few ticks?** They're your to-do list. Every tick you add is a small gift to a pollinator.
- **Lots of ticks, few visitors?** Give it a season. Gardens take time to be found.
- **A crowd of visitors?** Take a photo of the patch. It's lovely to look back on.

Nothing lasts, so notice it

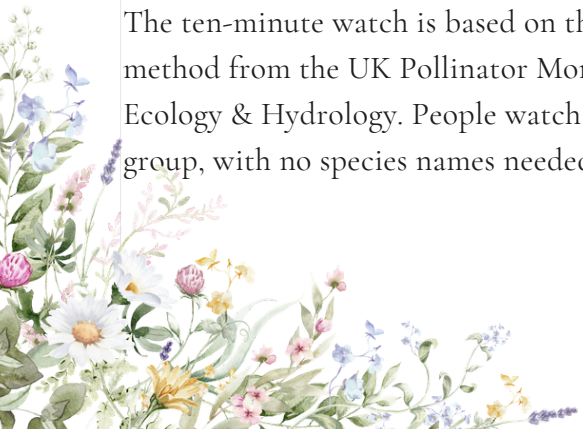
Blossoms keep their own time, so do your Snapshot once each season, watching the same flowers in the same spot. Change something, then count again. That's how a garden shows what it has done.

Season	Date	All insects counted	Insect groups	Habitat ticks	What I changed
Spring / Kōanga (Sep–Nov)					
Summer / Raumati (Dec–Feb)					
Autumn / Ngahuru (Mar– May)					
Winter / Hōtoke (Jun–Aug)					

Take a photo of your patch from the same spot each time. Next year, you'll be glad you did.

Where this method comes from

The ten-minute watch is based on the Flower-Insect Timed Count (FIT Count), a citizen science method from the UK Pollinator Monitoring Scheme, which is coordinated by the UK Centre for Ecology & Hydrology. People watch a 50 × 50 cm flower patch for ten minutes and tally insects by broad group, with no species names needed.





We've kept its counting rules and weather guidance, adapted the insect groups, plants and seasons for Aotearoa, and added a habitat checklist. Because the method was designed in the UK and Ireland, treat the Snapshot as a friendly record of change over time, not a formal survey.

- Flower-Insect Timed Counts (FIT Counts), Jersey Biodiversity Centre: the ten steps, weather rules and background on the UK scheme
- Flower-Insect Timed Count (FIT Count), All-Ireland Pollinator Plan: why the method exists and how repeat counts show change
- Wasps and bees: native bees, Te Ara: the size, looks and nesting of our 28 native bees Get to know our ngaro huruhuru, Auckland Botanic Gardens: native bee favourites (koromiko, mānuka, kānuka, pōhutukawa) and how far they forage
- Pollinator counts: insects and flowers, Science Learning Hub: a New Zealand pollinator-count activity, with a link to Manaaki Whenua's "What is this bug?" guide He aha tēnei pepeke? What is this bug? poster, Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research: te reo names for bee, beetle, butterfly and moth, and dragonfly

What to do with your Snapshot

This sheet is yours. Pop it on the fridge, tuck it in a notebook and do it again next season. The point is a few unhurried minutes outside.

Counting with a group? Your group leader may ask you to hand in your counts so everyone's can be added together. Use the same steps and the same ten minutes, and fill in the group and name boxes, so the counts can be compared fairly.

Just for the joy of it? Share your photos and your surprise visitor with someone who'll enjoy them. If you like naming species, add your sightings to iNaturalist too.

Looking ahead: Flȕr Star Sanctuaries will be using the Snapshot in a future project, to help start and support monitoring of our critical little creatures across Aotearoa. Insects pollinate our crops and forests and are the main food for many of our native birds and fish, yet long-term insect records are rare here, so there's much we don't yet know about how our insect populations are changing (RNZ, 2020). Small counts repeated regularly, the same way in the same spot, are how change shows up, and gardens and other spray-free spaces across the country could help fill that gap.

Good for you. Good for the bees.

Sit a while. Somebody small is glad you did.