

Bee Explorer



Did you know Baltic's rooftop is home to hives of busy honey bees?

Look out the South windows from Level 6 and you'll spot the hives. Managed by our project partner North East Young Dads and Lads (NEYDL), each hive houses 1 queen, 40,000 workers, and around 800 drones in mid-summer.



Is it a honey bee?

Honey bees are just one of many pollinating insects, including bumble bees, wasps, hoverflies, moths and butterflies. Below are some pollinators you might find near Baltic – can you tell them apart?

Did you know there are around 20,000 bee species on the planet? The UK has over 260 species – 24 bumblebees, over 240 solitary bees, and just one honey bee.



White-tailed Bumblebee

A very common, social bumblebee that emerges early in spring and feeds on flowers right through to autumn.



Honey Bee

Smaller, slendrer and less hairy than other bees, honey bees are usually kept in managed hives, though some live wild. They process flower nectar in their bodies and reduce its water content to produce honey.



Tawny Mining Bee

A solitary species known to nest in St Mary's Heritage Centre churchyard near Baltic. Look out for small soil mounds marking their underground nests.

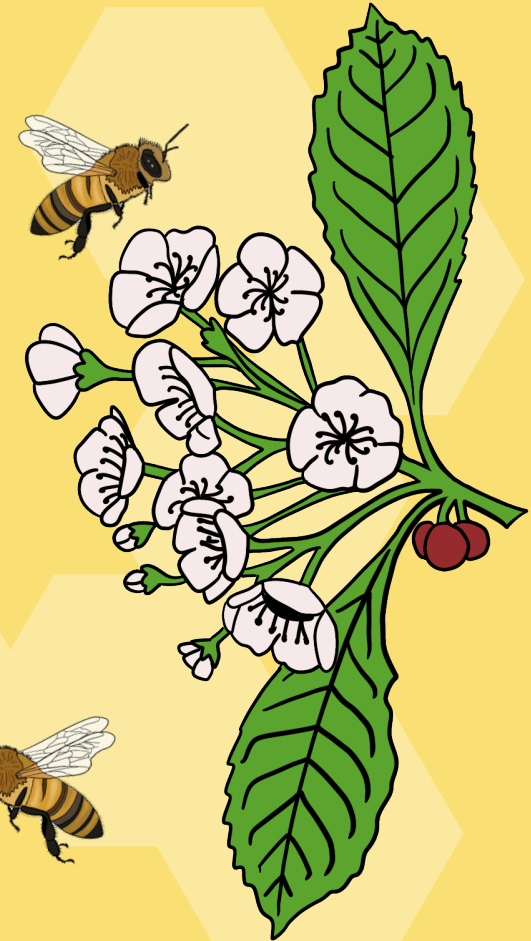


German Wasp

One of the UK's two most common wasp species. Though less efficient pollinators than bees, wasps do pollinate and provide natural pest control for healthy ecosystems.

Bees at Baltic

It may seem a surprising home, but Baltic's rooftop in the Tyne Gorge provides an excellent base for honey bees to forage. Research shows urban environments often offer better variety than farmland habitats. Our beekeepers are confident the bees can access diverse, abundant forage. We're mindful that too many colonies can impact other pollinators, so we practice responsible beekeeping.



The Beekeepers

North East Young Dads & Lads (NEYDL) is a youth support service helping young men and fathers play active roles in their children's lives and communities. Founded in 2015 and based at Baltic, they work across the region.

NEYDL uses beekeeping to help young dads engage with nature, build skills, and improve wellbeing. Honey from their hives is sold in Baltic Shop when in stock.

Birds, Bees, Bikes & Trees

Birds, Bees, Bikes & Trees is a partnership between Baltic, NEYDL and Newcastle University, funded by The National Lottery Climate Action Fund. The project aims to transform the way society thinks about young fathers and their influence on policy, while engaging local people of all ages in nature and climate activities.

Honey bees fly around two miles in all directions from their home, looking for sweet nectar and pollen from flowers of trees, bushes and low-growing plants.

Use this map to explore nearby Gateshead riverside sites where Baltic's bees forage and spot bees and pollinators along the way. We've left some pictures in white for you to colour in.

Pollinators help produce much of our food – nuts, berries, fruits and vegetables. Honey bees also make honey and wax from collected nectar.

About 0.5 miles South West from Baltic, a set of steps leads up to Swinburne Street Car Park, toward Gateshead Old Town Hall. Look around near the steps to see...

Cherry Laurel
Cream spears on lush evergreen bush. Flowers in May.

Honey bees stay in their hive when it rains, so you're more likely to see them on dry days.

Rosebay Willowherb
Tall spikes of striking pink. Flowers Jul-Sep.

Ivy
Light green flowerheads above the mass of dark green leaves. Flowers Sep-Nov.

A 0.5 mile walk West from Baltic, St Mary's Heritage Centre sits atop the hill, just West of The Glasshouse. Look up at the trees around the Centre to spot...

Lime
White-yellow clusters of 2-5. Flowers in Jul.

Bird Cherry
Long hanging clusters of white. Flowers in Apr.

Horse-chestnut
Whiskered spears of pinkish-white. Flowers in May.

Honey bees are tiny, dark and quiet, so look closely to spot them on flowers on warm days.

Different flowers bloom throughout the year, providing pollinators with a range of nectar across their foraging season.

0.2 miles East from Baltic is a footpath connecting South Shore Road and Saltmeadows Road, here you can find...

Buddleja
Purple spears popular with bumble bees and butterflies. Flowers May-Oct.

Thistle
Single lilac-pink bloom on bulbous spikes. Flowers Jul-Sep.

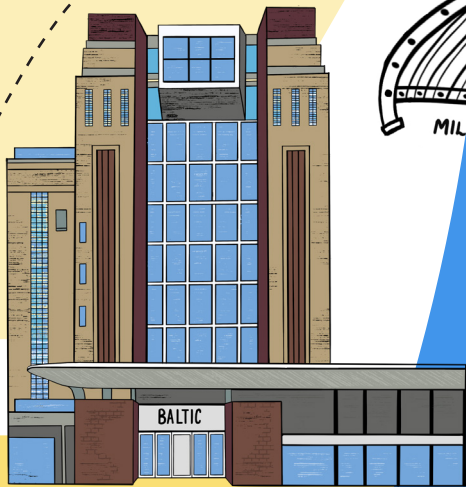
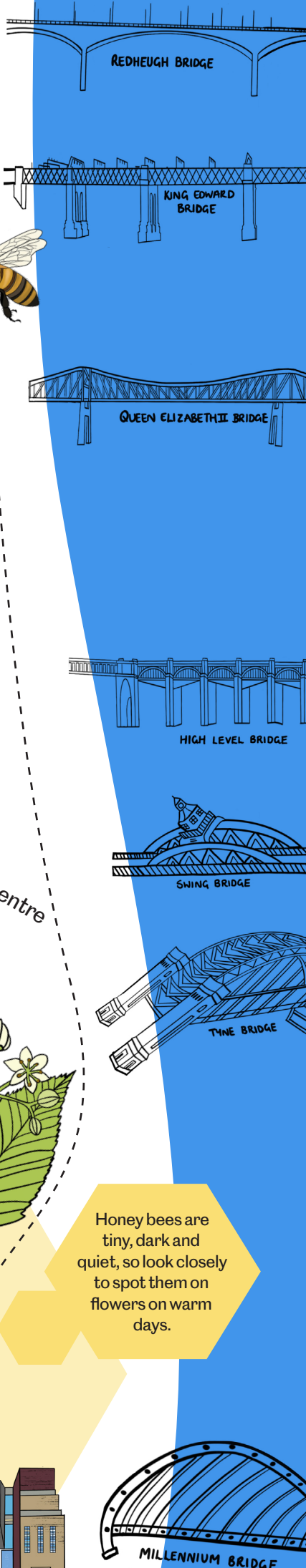
Cotoneaster
Tiny pink flowers on evergreen shrub. Flowers May-Jul.

See the back page of this guide to help identify honey bees from other pollinators you might find.

About a mile West along the river from Baltic, below the Redheugh Bridge, take the upper path to see...

Hawthorn
Masses of cream blossom. Flowers May-Jun.

Bramble (blackberry)
Light pink clusters on a wild tangle. Flowers Jul-Aug.



Noticed a different flower or bee? Add your own drawing here.

RIVER TYNE

How can you help?

We can all play our part in helping bees and pollinators thrive. Even the smallest outdoor space can have impact. Make a pledge to nature – choose yours from the list below, sign your name, tear it off to keep or take a photo to remember and share your promise:

No Mow

If you have a garden, leaving the grass to grow longer allows for pollinator-friendly plants like daisies, dandelions and clover to flower.

I _____
pledge to mow less!

Nature's Remedy

Weeds are simply plants in the wrong place. Consider leaving them there or use natural alternatives instead of chemicals to support nature. Try boiling water, lemon juice or vinegar for weeds, and use eggshells to discourage slugs or attract predators to control them.

I _____
pledge to let the chemicals go!



Compost

Reusing can save our planet, plants and pockets – home compost provides habitat (mining bees love to nest under compost heaps) and specific food waste is great for the garden, such as banana peel to feed roses and spoiled milk to control mildew.

I _____
pledge to reuse more!

Garden Kitchen

Growing food can help pollinators, even in the smallest outdoor spaces – hardy herbs like rosemary and thyme are low maintenance and attract bees and pollinators to their flowers. Why not offer a drink too – a shallow water bowl with stones is perfect for bees.

I _____
pledge to grow more!



Part of Birds Bees Bikes & Trees

Project Partners

BALTIC



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University



generously funded by

**COMMUNITY
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This guide was created by Baltic in collaboration with beekeepers Tom Jamieson and Jordan Pike, NEYDL staff and service users, Dr Michael Richardson from Newcastle University, and illustrator and artist Sofia Barton. Printed climate-consciously – please keep, share with a friend, compost or recycle this guide after use. Published July 2025.