

Your Buzzing Garden!

January

January can be a relatively quiet month for pollinators and insects since many enter a state of dormancy. For some, this state is pre-programmed into their life cycle (diapause), but for other insects, it can come on quickly in the face of harsh environmental conditions (quiescence). Quiescence can also be rapidly reversed, meaning that there are still some insects that will wake up during this month, especially on warmer days! Keep an eye out for these in your garden:



Cluster flies/blow flies (Polleniidae, Calliphoridae):
Active all year round, these flies can be important winter pollinators while other common insects are dormant. Cluster flies survive winter by huddling in groups and sticking to warmer areas, and blow flies often seek shelter in warm garbage or patches of sun.



Marmalade hoverfly (Episyrphus balteatus):
The most common hoverfly in the UK, the marmalade hoverfly remains dormant in the winter but emerges on warmer days. Look for two black "moustache" bands and the "thin-cut, thick-cut" yellow segments (its namesake!) on its abdomen.



Winter moth (Operophtera brumata):
This moth is active as an adult from late autumn through early winter. They are attracted to light and can often be seen in car headlights in the winter months.



Money spider (Linyphiidae):
These tiny spiders are some of the most common in the UK, and they spend the winter as adults. Although they can be difficult to see due to their small size, winter can be a great time to find their webs which are made more visible by frost.



Netted slug (Deroceras reticulatum):
Slugs are active all year round, although they may enter a more dormant state and hide out in warmer sites on colder days. They can even produce compounds that act as antifreeze, keeping them safe in sub-zero temperatures.

To encourage these insects, consider planting some winter-blooming flowers:

- Hazel
- Snowdrops
- Hellebores
- Winter heather
- Winter-flowering honeysuckle

