

Sligo PPN Tidy Towns – Lecture 1

Situation:

A bare wall

Solution:

Plant a hedge along a wall

WHAT? – Suitable species

- Hawthorn
- Elder
- Blackthorn
- Guelder rose
- Spindle
- Honeysuckle
- For an evergreen hedge plant Holly
- For a more formal look plant yew

HOW? –

- Buy bare-root plants in Autumn
- Dig holes a meter from the wall
- Spread plants 60-80cm apart and firm in soil
- Can also plant in a double or staggered row



AVOID – Leyland Cypress and Laurel

Situation:

Low maintenance
Hanging Baskets

Solution:

Use perennials

WHAT? – Suitable species

- Periwinkles (*Vinca minor* & *Vinca major*)- come in lovely shades of blue, purple and white
- Perennial Nasturtiums
- Bidens
- Bacopa

HOW? –

- Plant in hanging baskets
- Use slow release fertiliser
- Give a light trim after flowering to encourage nice fresh foliage
- The Vincas will flower again each year
- The Bidens and Bacopa are lovely options but they might not survive the winter outside.



Situation:

Public Planters/boxes

Solution:

Use perennials

WHAT? – Perennials are a great low maintenance option and can be better for pollinators

-  Lavender – looks great, scented, hardy and very good for pollinators. Choose English over French lavender as better suited to Irish conditions.
- Rudbeckia – Easy to grow and hardy
- *Verbena bonariensis* - Sweet smelling, colourful, pollinator friendly, long flowering period,

HOW? –

- Use slow-release fertiliser when planting and give another feed each spring
- Cut back stems in autumn and tidy up before winter



- Verbena is a tall plant so best used in large planters or beds

Situation:

Watery Sites and Wet Areas

Solution:

Make use of what you have



WHAT? – Suitable species

- Purple loosestrife
- Marsh marigold
- Valerian
- Meadowsweet
- Yellow iris
- Ragged robin
- Ferns – Soft shield fern, shuttlecock fern, hard fern
- Non-native options; Golden ray, *Astilbe*, *Primula viallii*

HOW? –

- Enhance features such as streams, drains or pools instead of putting in drainage
- Water features are excellent for birds, frogs and newts!
- For wet areas along a drain or stream a **bog-garden** is a lovely, wildlife-friendly feature – attractive to dragonflies, frogs and many other insects
- You can incorporate garden compost, rotted leaf litter and composted grass clippings into these areas



Situation:

Ground cover/ public spaces

Solution:

Clipped Ivy Beds

WHAT? –

- Ivy looks great, evergreen, low maintenance, no need for spraying, hardy, grows very well in Ireland
- Foraging habitat for small birds
- There are variegated options available for more colour, however the plain green ivy is more vigorous so general advice is not to mix variegated and unvariegated plants.
- Plain green does better in shaded spots while variegated prefers areas with more light



Situation:

Parks and Public Spaces

Solution:

Groves and copses of trees

WHAT? – Groups of trees are much better than isolated trees for wildlife – birds, mammals and many invertebrates

- Think about the soil;
Wet – Birch, Alder or Aspen could work well
Free draining – Oak are wonderful for wildlife
Peaty soil – Pine, Sessile oak or Downy Birch
- Autumn food for wildlife – Crab apple, Rowan. Wild Cherrv

HOW? –

- You can buy bare-root plants in Autumn
- Larger plants will need to be staked (remember to drive the stake in first before planting to not damage the roots)
- Think about occasional watering and check ties to ensure they aren't too tight

Situation:

Parks and Public Spaces

Solution:

Wildflower Meadow

HOW? –

- Before thinking about re-seeding, change the management regime – stop mowing regularly, don't fertilize and see what grows.
- Yellow rattle is useful to sow to prevent bigger competing plants like Thistle and Dock from taking over
- Can cut once a year – traditional meadow (remember to remove cuttings if you mow). Or twice a year - which will reduce stronger weeds like dock and thistle etc.
- Paths of mown grass can add a lovely feature
- LOW MAINTENANCE OR NO MAINTENANCE IS THE BEST POLICY



The All Ireland Pollinator Plan also have some excellent resources -

<https://pollinators.ie/resources/>