

Project Bumblebee is formally rolled out

SAINSBURY'S AND Syngenta have now rolled out the much vaunted 'Project Bumblebee', an attempt to stem and reverse the humble bumble's dwindling numbers.

Over the last 30 years the bumblebee has been in steady decline and recent research shows their populations are down by 70 percent. Already three of the 25 species traditionally found in the UK have become extinct.

The project will involve the specialist training of over 300 of Sainsbury's growers and farmers, who farm in excess of 80,000 hectares of farmland across the UK. The project's aim is to grow vital pollen and nectar rich habitats on their farms, which in turn will hopefully result in the number of bumblebees increasing by many millions over the next three summers.

The project will train growers and farmers in the new skills required to manage bumblebee habitats. This follows a successful pilot project, which included Marshalls Bros,

one of Sainsbury's largest green vegetable suppliers. It is based on five years of scientific research by Syngenta to create the ideal environment for bumblebees to prosper.

Currently there are over 500 growers involved in the project with some 600 hectares of seed mix being sown across the UK (one hectare is equivalent to an area the size as the new Wembley Stadium football pitch). ○

