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## The Bees' Needs

let's get buzzing  
in Buriton



### February - April: Waking the World

This is the first of four pieces that show the world according to a bee living in the UK. Let us introduce you to Belinda a buff tailed bumblebee, feeding on one of her favourites at this time of year - willow catkins

Belinda is going to tell you what she and other pollinators are doing at this time of year, how it helps people and how the way we look after our gardens can be life or death to them.

I am just waking up after a long sleep. My body is stiff, my wings feel dusty, and the world smells damp and cold. I am a queen bumblebee, and I have spent months hidden away in the soil, surviving on stored fat while frost and rain passed above me.

Some of my cousins - like hardy hoverflies and early solitary bees - have already been awake for a while, but now it is my turn. These months are dangerous for us. I must feed quickly to rebuild my strength, yet flowers are still scarce. When



I find willow catkins, crocuses, snowdrops, or early flowering heather, it feels like treasure.

I drink nectar for energy and collect pollen to help my eggs develop. Soon, I must find a safe nest site - perhaps an old mouse hole or a quiet patch of long grass - where I can lay my first eggs and raise my first daughters alone.

What I do now shapes the rest of the year. If I survive spring, my colony will exist, because every nest starts with a single queen. If I don't survive, my colony never will.

My early foraging also helps humans, even if they don't notice. As I move from flower to flower, pollen sticks to my fuzzy body and is carried between plants. This helps fruit trees, hedgerows, and crops like apples and berries begin their year.

Without pollinators awake this early, many harvests would be smaller and less reliable. Humans can help me most at this time by thinking ahead. Leaving early flowers in gardens, parks, and churchyards is a gift I desperately need.

Dandelions are not weeds to me - they are lifelines.

Letting grass grow a little longer, planting native shrubs, and avoiding pesticides in spring all make survival more likely.

A small, undisturbed patch of soil or leaves might even become my home.

Spring is a fragile beginning. With a little help, it can become a buzzing future.