

# INSECTOPIA COURSE

*A blended Training programme*



*Eco-Innovation + Biodiversity:  
creative strategies for pollinator  
conservation*



Co-funded by  
the European Union

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## CONTEXT

Insectopia, a flagship initiative by the EU GREEN Alliance, transforms university campuses into vibrant “insect utopias,” blending biodiversity, ecosystem restoration, and creative expression. A European movement connecting youth, nature and innovation through pollinator-inspired ideas.

Insectopia includes a dynamic educational initiative that has been running since the beginning of the year, offering a range of webinars and hands-on activities aimed at deepening knowledge and engagement with pollinators, biodiversity, and ecosystem restoration. Coordinated by the University of Extremadura (UEX), Insectopia brings together students, researchers, and educators from multiple partner institutions across Europe.

## Blended training programme

As part of this initiative, participants are invited to take part in a hybrid training programme that combines scientific knowledge (via thematic webinars) with experiential learning during a dedicated in-person week. A key feature of this immersive week is the hackathon—an intensive and collaborative environment where interdisciplinary teams tackle real-world ecological challenges using innovative, design-based approaches.



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## 3 ECTS Microcredential

In recognition of the learning outcomes and commitment involved in this activity, the University of Extremadura will award participants a micro-credential equivalent to 3 ECTS credits. This credential serves to acknowledge the comprehensive training experience and practical skills gained during the Insectopia programme.

As for the recognition of these 3 ECTS credits in students' official academic records, this will depend on the regulations of each participating university. Nonetheless, we anticipate that this micro-credential may be eligible for inclusion in the European Diploma Supplement, enhancing its value and visibility for students across the European Higher Education Area.

## TRAINING PROGRAMME

Block 1: Pollinators and Biodiversity – Scientific Knowledge

- Pollinators: Diversity, Importance, and Causes of Their Decline. Prof. Francisco Javier Valtueña (University of Extremadura, Spain)
- Why Do We Need Pollinators? Role, Threats, and Protection of This Insect Group – Prof. Cupşa Diana (University of Oradea, Romania)
- The Pollinating Crisis: A Threat to Human Survival – Rita Azedo & André Oliveira (University of Évora, Portugal)
- Rewarding Farmland Insect Diversity Through Result-Based Agri-Environment Schemes – Prof. Dolores Byrne (Institute of Technology Sligo - ATU)
- How Citizen Science Can Help the Study of Pollinators – Prof. Cristina Castracani (University of Parma, Italy)

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## **Block 2: Technology, Architecture, and Ecosystem Restoration**

- Architectural Spaces for Insects and People – Lecturer arch. Silviu Medeşan & PhD candidate arch. George Tamaş (University of Oradea)
- LANDART for Creative and Participatory Ecosystem Restoration – Antonio Román Casas (University of Extremadura, Spain)
- From Artificial Nests to AI Trail Cameras: New Technology for Studying and Monitoring Insect Biodiversity – Daniele Giannetti (University of Parma, Italy)
- Pollinators in Rural Areas – PhD Eng. Jowita Pyszczek (Wroctaw University of Environmental and Life Sciences, Poland)

## **Block 3: Practical and Experiential Interaction – In-Person Sessions**

- Europe’s Vision for Pollinators: Connecting Policies, People, and Biodiversity. High-level conference by Nicolas Manthe, Policy Officer (European Commission - DG ENVIRONMENT - Pollinators Team)

### Attendance to Innovation & Science-Based Sessions (1 hour each):

- BeeSage: Innovation with Sensors to Decode Nectar Flows and Habitat Health
- Floral Seduction: The Science of Pollination and Attraction
- Verata Anastrophy: Documentary and Roundtable on Climate Change, Empathy with Insects, and Queer Ecologies
- Architectural Spaces for Insects and People, adapted version
- Beyond the Buzz: Designing Effective Hotels for Solitary Bees
- Citizen Science in Bloom: iNaturalist and BioUNIVERSITY
- Hackathon: 6 in-person sessions (2 hours each) – Collaborative innovation challenges focused on ecosystem solutions + Final presentation.