

Bee City USA - Asheville NC

Report on 2020

Pollinator Habitat Creation & Enhancement

In 2020 we were able to create, enhance, and facilitate the creation of pollinator habitat in numerous ways. As part of a larger project to create a greenway park by the river in Asheville's River Arts District, one of our committee members, Betsy Savely, led a pollinator garden installation of over 120 native perennials, shrubs, and grasses donated by Carolina Native Nursery. We will continue to help create habitat as part of this project, and plan to install educational signage as well. In partnership with the City of Asheville, we run an Adopt-a-Spot program in which underutilized parcels of public land within the City are 'adopted' by individuals or businesses. These are most often planted with either native pollinator plants and/or edible plants, and are one of the ways we incentivize our community to create native habitats within the city. In March, we launched our Pollinator Garden Certification program. Through this initiative, community members can apply to certify their gardens as pollinator habitat. We have four tiers of habitat quality based primarily on the species diversity of the garden. Our intent is to educate the community about the necessary components of a functional pollinator habitat, and to inspire them to create or enhance their garden in order to qualify. Certified garden owners have the option of purchasing a habitat sign to display in their gardens—the signs have a QR code that leads to our website where additional information can be found. We hope that as these become more prevalent around the city, the more people will start to consider the importance of native habitat and catalyze the paradigm shift away from grass lawns. In 2020 we certified around 50 gardens, and the number continues to grow! Asheville GreenWorks was able to host both of our biannual Tree Giveaways in socially distant formats—we gave away hundreds of native saplings to Buncombe County residents, and instructed them on planting and tree maintenance. Many of the species we offer are nectar and pollen sources, and/or larval hosts for native pollinators. In addition to the giveaways, we led a number of tree plantings of our own, and hosted an affordable native pollinator plant sale. We also spent time maintaining and enhancing the handful of urban orchards that we've installed around town. Other local organizations and businesses have also worked hard to increase habitat in Asheville. Pollinator-friendly landscaping company, Sriggly's Beescaping, helped clients restore over 25,000 square feet of native habitat. Living Roofs, a local green roof company incorporated native, pollinator-friendly plants into several of their installations last year, helping to provide habitat in even the most urban parts of the city. Many of our local native nurseries, such as Carolina Native Nursery, Southeastern Natives, Reems Creek Nursery, Painters Greenhouse, Pisgah Plants, Willow Creek Nursery, and Saturnia Farms donated plants for, and assisted with, numerous garden installations in 2020.

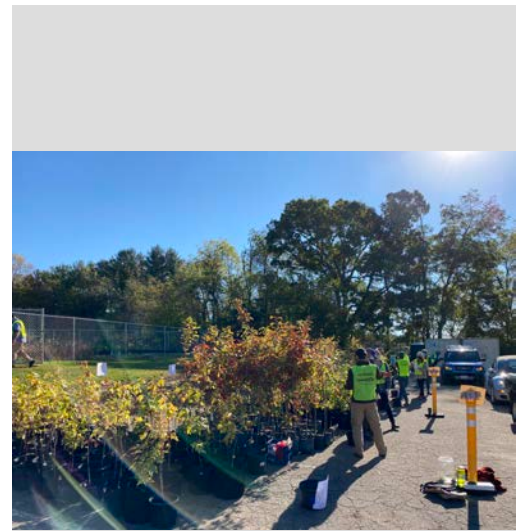




One of our committee members digging into our latest pollinator habitat.



One of our new "Certified Pollinator Habitat" signs!



Volunteers and GreenWorks team members in the process of giving away hundreds of native tree saplings to Buncombe County residents.

Education & Outreach

Early in the year we held our first ever Buzz Gathering—an opportunity for people involved with pollinator conservation and advocacy to get together and discuss what they've been working on, and how we can all collaborate. As the COVID situation unfolded many of our events for the year could no longer take place, but we adapted as best we could. With support from Carolina Native Nursery, we held our annual Pollination Celebration in a virtual format. This included 4 webinars on various pollinator-related topics, free streaming access to the documentary *The Pollinators*, and our first ever pollinator photo contest. The photo contest received 428 entries! Several of our committee members including Bryan Tompkins, wildlife biologist with the USFWS, and Lisa Wagner, former Director of Education at the Clemson Botanical Garden, offered various pollinator and native plant virtual workshops throughout the year. Our education team at Asheville GreenWorks was able to lead a few virtual lessons focused on pollinators. We hosted a Facebook live stream about the importance of pollinators, and led an interactive lesson about the monarch migration with Claxton Elementary. Groups outside of our organization provided outreach as well. Saturnia Farms, Reems Creek Nursery, and Spriggly's Beescaping hosted online workshops related to pollinators and creating native habitat.

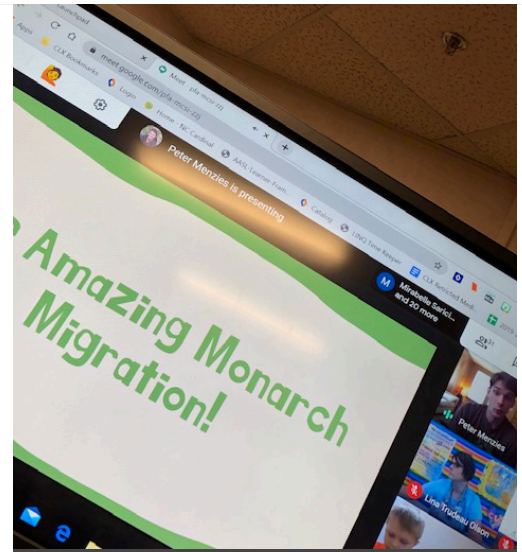




Bee City USA - Asheville Leadership Committee Co-Chair, Peter Menzies, welcomes pollinator advocates from around Asheville to the first ever Great Buzz Gathering in early 2020.



In an effort to encourage our community to get outside and think more about the significance and beauty of pollinators, while remaining socially distant, we organized our first ever Pollinator Photo Contest! We received 428 entries, gave away dozens of prizes, and can't wait to host another one.



The Asheville GreenWorks education team leads an interactive monarch migration lesson online for 2nd graders at Claxton Elementary.

Policies & Practices

In the workshops that we lead on pollinator conservation, we always emphasize the importance of moving away from conventional pesticides. We discuss pollinator-friendly pest management, and being conscious of purchasing plants grown without harmful pesticides. One of our objectives is encouraging the City to incorporate pollinator-friendly pest management strategies into their protocols. We are currently working to find a sponsoring City department and liaison within that department for Bee City USA - Asheville. Once we are able to accomplish this, we will be in a better position to encourage the incorporation of IPM practices.

Integrated Pest Management Plan:

Recommended Native Plant List:

Recommended Native Plant Supplier List:



Learn More



Bee City USA - Asheville Leadership Committee taking a break from planting

