Pollinator Habitat Creation & Enhancement

Our Keep Gastonia Beautiful Bee City USA Committee worked on three pollinator creations and enhancements. First, we installed educational raised beds at our Farmers Market that have items kids of all ages can touch, smell, taste (with parent’s permission) to provide an interactive area. Next, we updated the front entrance to our Farmers Market to include only pollinator-friendly plantings. This helps us tie in the fact that the Farmers Market would not be operating if it weren’t for bees pollinating crops. Our biggest project was the complete overhaul of a community garden. Raised beds were installed to allow the gardeners more ease when planting. Pollinator-friendly plants are planted around the sign and also in designated beds throughout the garden. We are excited to have this garden as it has provided us with a multitude of volunteer groups who were eager and willing to help us make the transformation happen. This garden is located in a food desert in the city and has provided educational spaces for small meetings to occur to talk about gardening and expanding the urban garden footprint.

Education & Outreach

Our Bee City Committee hosted our annual Beetopia event which yielded around 350 participants. Featuring an interactive hive, "beezeebo" and education/information/activities for all ages. We partner with the Gaston County Beekeepers Association for Bee school, which had 60 attendees. The Schiele Museum, which has 3 apiaries on their farm,
hosted a bug day which the Beekeepers Association presented at. We had various partnerships with the Beekeepers to present educational information at the Gaston County Library, various schools, daycares, and afterschool groups. Outreach was also provided by the Beekeepers, in the form of a workshop to a local community garden group.

Policies & Practices

Hand weeding in all designated pollinator habitats and whenever possible in other planted areas. The use of observational scouting for pests and disease, use of organic control measures on initial pest/disease observations, and higher standard of disease tolerance when beneficial insects are observed. The soil is top-dressed with cow manure to reduce synthetic fertilizers. Organic pelletized chicken/cow manure is used as well. Staff tending to the beds, attending continuing education classes where IPM is a top priority.

Integrated Pest Management Plan:

Recommended Native Plant List: [link](https://www.cityofgastonia.com/images/keepgastoniabeautiful/Bee_City/2017-049_Mid-AtlanticPlantList_Dec2017_web-3page.pdf)
Recommended Native Plant Supplier List: [link](2017-049_Mid-AtlanticPlantList_Dec2017_web-3page.pdf)
[link](https://gardeningwithcreekside.com/)
Keep Gastonia Beautiful Bee City Committee plus other board members at our September meeting.