

Bee City USA - Asheville

Report on 2022

Pollinator Habitat Creation & Enhancement

In 2022, we enhanced and facilitated the creation of numerous pollinator habitats and projects in Asheville. As part of a larger project to expand the Wilma Dykeman Greenway by the French Broad River, we continued to enhance a pollinator garden installation (The RAD Hab – River Arts District Habitat) led by committee members, Betsy Savely and Bruce Mowrey. Eight Bee City Pollenteers and Asheville GreenWorks TreeKeepers joined us to remove the grass, bring in fresh composted topsoil then cover it all with clean cardboard and mulch. Volunteers then planted the expanded space with 11 native shrubs and one native tree, donated by Carolina Natives and GreenWorks. Bryan Tompkins also led the effort to enhance the Asheville’s Garden Club’s garden with more native plants at the North Asheville post office. Back in 2020, we launched our Pollinator Garden Certification Program which allows community members to apply to certify their gardens as native pollinator habitats. In 2022 we certified 51 pollinator gardens (leading to a total of 150 locally certified gardens as of February, 2023). The certification process requires applicants to name the native trees and shrubs in their gardens and native wildflowers blooming in spring, summer, and fall, and answer questions about their pest management and invasive plant removal practices. Thanks to the leadership of Bee City Asheville’s committee member, Bryan Tompkins, of the US Fish & Wildlife Service, Asheville GreenWorks and Bee City Asheville were able to plan and install a Native Pollinator Plant Bank. The Plant Bank is a hoop house located at GreenWorks’ native tree nursery. Its purpose is to be tiered, with the primary function being to divide and propagate plants for public habitat planting (eg. public schools, public community gardens, parks & greenways, public housing, etc). Public projects also present a wider opportunity for integrating educational components into plantings. In the summer, our dear friend, Tim Wilkins, coordinated the donation of 5,000 swamp milkweed plants grown and given by Costa Farms to pollinator guardians and groups throughout WNC. Asheville Greenworks received 2,000 plants. GreenWorks installed 500 plants at our existing pollinator habitat on the Hominy Creek Greenway and made about 600 plants available to over 140 gardeners who have certified pollinator habitats. With the rest of the plants, our Bee City – AVL Leadership team got creative to add monarch habitats in strategic places—a butterfly corridor on South French Broad Avenue; native pollinator habitats at three area elementary schools; pollinator habitats at the Wilma Dykeman Greenway, Beaver Lake Park, and Beaver Lake Bird Sanctuary; pollinator habitat at Rhododendron Creek; and riparian habitat at Todd Park Island on the New River outside Buncombe County.

How many habitat projects did you help to create or enhance last year?

11

How many total square feet of habitat were created or enhanced?

550

How many volunteers helped with those projects?

20

Please check all that describe the habitats your affiliate helped to create or enhance last year with pollinator benefit in mind.

- Flower garden
- Orchard
- Meadow
- Pollinator-friendly lawn (with flowering clover, dandelions...)
- Native milkweed planting for monarchs and bees (where appropriate)
- Native pollinator-friendly tree planting
- Roadside/rights of way planting



Bee City Asheville Committee members and volunteers plant the River Arts District Pollinator Habitat expansion area.

Education & Outreach

2022 marked our 10th anniversary as America's first Bee City USA affiliate, which we celebrated with a yearlong Pollination Celebration! Asheville offered a diverse lineup of socially distanced, educational, and pollinator-centered events to celebrate our pollen-bearing friends and all that they do for us. We kicked off the year with the third annual Great Buzz Gathering – an event opportunity for local individuals and organizations involved with pollinator conservation and advocacy to join together and discuss what they have been working on and how we can collaborate in the coming year.

For the yearlong Pollination Celebration, our committee supported a pollinator spelling bee, webinars, workshops, a honey festival, a photo contest, presentations, tours, monarch migration viewing, and tabling events. We held two giveaways to bring native plants to the community: one, a native tree giveaway; and the second, a raffle for a fully installed native pollinator garden. Our very own committee members hosted webinars and workshops on topics such as How to Certify Your Pollinator Habitat, and, What Pollinator-Friendly Trees to Plant This Spring. Phyllis Stiles made presentations about the importance of trees to pollinators to the Urban Forest Commission and Tree Protection Taskforce. We even hosted a large presentation by local nature writer, horticulturist, and small business owner Brennan Bansham. Committee member Ruth Gonzalez of Reems Creek Nursery hosted a Pollinator Garden Tour and a workshop on How to Build a Pollinator Garden. Committee member Bill Jones of Carolina Native Nursery hosted a Nursery Tour as well as a presentation with author and gardener Brie Arthur. Phyllis Stiles hosted a pollinator safari along the greenway and a scavenger hunt for foods that benefited from pollinators at the N Asheville tailgate market. Overall, the Asheville Bee City Committee hosted 20 events throughout the year to celebrate our 10th anniversary as a Bee City affiliate, reaching over 480 individuals in our communities.

How many pollinator-related events did your affiliate host or help with last year (in total)?

20

How many people attended those events (in total)?

500

How many Bee City USA logo street signs have you installed to date (in total)?

2

*Did your city council/county commission (highest elected body) issue a proclamation for National Pollinator Week last summer?
Please note: this is now an optional activity.*

- Yes



Pollinator Safari participants look at monarch caterpillar!

Policies & Practices

When Asheville's City Council voted to accept the initial Bee City USA resolution in 2012, there was no IPM requirement; however, Asheville GreenWorks continues to advocate for pollinator friendly pest management at the individual, institutional, and city policy levels. We hope to work with city staff toward the development of an IPM plan in the future and strive to model toxic-free behavior in our own activities, stressing exotic invasive removal by hand-pulling. For example, when we prepared the pollinator garden along the French Broad Riverway, we used a sod remover rather than

herbicides. A Bee City committee member has presented to the Sustainability Advisory Committee on Energy and the Environment (SACEE) to encourage the City to include pollinator conservation in the City's Sustainability Plan and to adopt an IPM plan. A 13 member blue-ribbon task force of professionals with knowledge of landscaping, propagating, and/or selling native plants updated the Bee City USA-Asheville Recommended Pollinator-Friendly Species List and Native Plant Supplier List in 2021 to include an explanation of each supplier's pollinator-conscious policy on pest management. It also indicates each plant's value to pollinators. This list guides our habitat creation and enhancement decisions and we continue to promote this list to the public at large.

What actions have you taken to make pest management practices more pollinator-friendly?

- **Avoided use of pesticides in public sites containing designated pollinator habitat or other sensitive features (except when targeted use is deemed the best option for invasive or noxious weed, insect or disease management)**
- **Implemented non-chemical pest prevention and management methods on city or campus grounds**
- **Reduced the total area of city or campus-managed lands to which pesticides are applied**
- **Distributed educational materials to residents or students to encourage the reduction or elimination of pesticide use**
- **Sourced plants for city or campus grounds that were not treated with neonicotinoids**

Are efforts underway in your community to further reduce pesticide use in residential or business areas? This may include neighborhood-led efforts, outreach to landscapers, etc. If so, please describe.

Our garden certification program targeted at private property asks applicants about their pest management practices. Our Recommended Species List includes only pollinator-friendly native plant suppliers and landscapers, who must provide public statements on their pest management philosophy.

In your city or campus, are any policy initiatives underway to further protect pollinators, people or waterways from pesticides?

We do not yet have an IPM plan integrated into our city policies to protect pollinators, people, and waterways from pesticides. We hope to study, summarize and contrast the IPM plans of several successful Bee Cities as model examples for the city of Asheville to help us move closer to having Asheville get serious about developing our own IPM plan.

Please describe actions by your affiliate to attend training on ecologically-based Integrated Pest Management and/or to review IPM plans and programs considered of high quality by Bee City USA?

Bee City Asheville promoted pest management webinars offered by the Xerces Society and some committee members attended.

Integrated Pest Management Plan:

Recommended Native Plant List:

<https://www.ashevillegreenworks.org/native-pollinator-plants-and-nurseries.html>

Recommended Native Plant Supplier List:

<https://www.ashevillegreenworks.org/native-pollinator-plants-and-nurseries.html>



Prepared the RAD Hab pollinator garden along the French Broad Riverway using a sod remover rather than herbicides

Learn More



A portion of our Asheville Bee City Committee at the last group potluck!