Pollinator Habitat Creation & Enhancement

UConn students completed invasive species removal and trail maintenance in the Hillside Environmental Education Park (HEEP) a number of times this year on 4/04/2022, 9/28/2022, 10/07/2022, 10/17/2022, 10/21/2022, and 10/31/2022. Cumulatively, these trail cleanups had 25 volunteers. Spring Valley Student Farm continued to host its 'Farm Fridays' during the Fall and Spring semesters in which volunteers removed invasives, planted pollinator friendly plants, and seeded milkweed with a total of 590 volunteers. The EcoGarden club continued to plant and harvest mint and garlic, in addition to letting wildflowers like aster and goldenrod proliferate around the garden. Throughout all these plantings, EcoGarden had a total number of 25 volunteers. The UConn Master Gardener Program replanted an area of about 25 square feet in the Litchfield Extension Center to be a pollinator garden across 3 days with 5 volunteers. This work included reseeding some annuals, planting five new different perennial plants. Again, in 2022, the Ocean Research and Conservation Association partnered with a variety of organizations on campus such as the Office of Sustainability and the UConn Recovery Community to cleanup litter all across campus on 10/30/2022 with 200 volunteers. The UConn Arboretum continued to plant hundreds of native tree species including the usual oaks, pine trees, and dogwoods along with the annual class tree planting of a three-flowered maple on 4/20 with 6 volunteers. The UConn Beekeeping Club began to host 4 hives at the Spring Valley Student Farm. Throughout the spring and fall semester they showed students how to take care of bees, while also educating UConn on the effects and benefits of pollinator. The total square footage enhanced or created comes from Spring Valley Student Farm, EcoGarden Club, HEEP trail cleanups, and the Master Gardener Program.

How many habitat projects did you help to create or enhance last year?
35

How many total square feet of habitat were created or enhanced?
63668

How many volunteers helped with those projects?
905

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

- Flower garden
- Vegetable garden
- Natural area with tree snags and stumps, and bare areas for ground nesting species
- Meadow
- Pollinator-friendly lawn (with flowering clover, dandelions...)
- Herb garden
- Native milkweed planting for monarchs and bees (where appropriate)
- Invasive/exotic plant species removal for habitat improvement
- Rain garden/bioswale

Education & Outreach

All events listed below were hosted by groups and organizations that have representatives on our UConn Bee Campus Committee and/or participate in pollinator-related outreach and education within our UConn campus and local communities. 1. UConn Bug Week UConn Extension celebrated Bug Week from July 17 – 23 with virtual programs and resources for the entire family. All ages were welcome for the events, which included bug-related crafts, recipes, an activity to win a free bug kit, Connecticut Science Center programs and a photo contest. 2. NatureRx Forest Bathing with Reagan Stacey The Office of Sustainability and NatureRx went forest bathing on April 29th as Regan Stacey lead us through the forests of the HEEP. Forest bathing is the practice of immersing yourself in nature in a mindful way, using your senses to derive a whole range of benefits for your physical, mental, emotional, and social health. It is also known as Shinrin-yoku in
Japan. ‘Shinrin’ means forest and ‘Yoku’ stands for bathing. 3. Ornamentales/Webinars for Spanish-Speaking Workers in the Green Industry The UConn Greenhouses hosted a virtual workshop discussing how spanish speaking individuals work in the Green Industry. 4. Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group Symposium The Connecticut Invasive Plant Working Group hosted its annual symposium on November 3rd for 6 hours of presentations featuring current science-based research and information on supporting pollinators in managed landscapes. This program is designed for growers and other green industry professionals, landscape service providers, landscape architects and designers, town commissions, municipalities, schools, and homeowners. 5. UConn Teale Lecture Series: America's Public Lands: A Political & Conservation Success Story As Part of the Teale Lecture Series distinguished Professor Emeritus from the UC Berkeley Dr. John Leshy presents on the history of conserved land in the United States and how as emerging citizens in the era of climate change, students can be hopeful for the future. 6. Digitization TCN: iDigBees Network, Towards Complete Digitization of US Bee Collection The Biodiversity Research Collections, with Katrina Menard in the lead, was recently awarded a National Science Foundation grant to digitize it’s bee collection as part of an effort to track the effects of climate change in this enigmatic group of pollinators. The University of Connecticut collection is particularly important as one of the largest collections of New England bees, and by making these data available to researchers and the public through digitization and imaging, we hope to better understand how climate change affects the distribution and diversity. 7. CT Chapter of Future Farmers of America Greenhouse EEB Greenhouse staff and volunteers hosted the CT Chapter of the Future Farmers of America to discuss the diverse plant collection here. Topics ranged from procurement of specimens to the ecology of species in their native environments with a particular focus on agriculturally relevant plants. 8. Farm Fresh Markets The Farm Fresh Market offered fresh seasonal produce from our own Spring Valley Student Farm and baked goods from our Not Just Desserts Bakery. Pedestrians got to stop by and chat with the student farmers and learn more about some interesting varieties they grow, their farming practices, and what they love about Spring Valley Student Farm. 9. Trip to Rose Berry Farm A morning of picking apples and squash at Rose’s Berry Farm in Glastonbury, CT. Winny Contreras, farm manager, discussed crop production as well as the realities of Mexican migrant farm labor in CT. Ms. Rose discussed family farming in the CT River Valley and challenges to bringing you local, healthy food. Sponsored by CLAS Activist-in-Residence Program, The Asian and Asian American Studies Institute, the Honors Program, UConn Spring Valley Student Farm, El Instituto, Anne Gebelein, Kimberly Vasquez. 10. Know Your Farmer Fair Storrs residents had the opportunity to help the Windham Community Food Network maintain their gardens. They also supported the Willimantic community combat the larger issue of food insecurity. Volunteers were advised to wear long pants and long sleeved shirts. Garden clean-up tasks varied from weeding, mulching, building garden beds, or composting garden beds. Community Outreach Transportation was provided to and from the service site. 11. Rachel Carson Talk about the Environment Rachel Carson became a founder of the environmental movement in the 1960s with her book “Silent Spring,” which outlined the death of life on earth as we know it due to the indiscriminate use of pesticides. This talk, hosted by Bev York, Museum Educator, Windham Mills Museum, and Adjunct Instructor, gave an illustrated and interactive view of Carson’s struggles to expose “forever chemicals” and discusses action steps for our ongoing crisis. 12. Doctoral Dissertation Oral Defense of Krista Dotzel Department of Anthropology Doctoral Dissertation Oral Defense title “When the Corn is in the Milk: Phytoliths, Plant Processing Strategies, and Agriculture in Southern New England 2500-500 BP”. 13. A Visit to the Miniature Forest Attendees had the opportunity to gain insights into the mosses of Northeastern Connecticut with Dr.
Bernard Goffinet of the University of Connecticut’s Department of Ecology & Evolutionary Biology. People got to join Dr. Goffinet on an easy hike through a portion of the 165-acre parcel known as the “HEEP”, or Hillside Environmental Education Park. Participants explored, discovered, and heard stories about native mosses and the miniature forest that can be found right below their feet.

14. The Green Careers Panel
The Green Careers Panel was an event sponsored by the Office of Sustainability to provide an opportunity for students to see how their interests align with real-life sustainability and environmental career paths and to gain general career advice as well. As there is increased momentum of student interest in careers in sustainability and the environment, they believed 2022 would be extremely helpful in providing students with insight into the many paths they can take to pursue a "green" career!

15. Earth Day Spring Fling
The UConn Office of Sustainability invited campus to celebrate the planet and sustainability! They had plenty of events, food, and eco-community members out and about campus: Dining Services zero waste BBQ + Dairy Bar Truck + Tree Cupcakes - Environmental Art Show -GOAT YOGA! Noon-1pm on Founder’s Green - Party Peddler Bike around campus - Earth Day Vendors/Student Orgs - Class Tree Planting Ceremony (125th Year!)

16. SoilShop
Talia Clark, a NRCA Conservation Ambassador, and high school student in Waterbury conducted a free lead soil screening to residents.

17. Planet Forward 2022 Storytelling Summit
Students, staff, and faculty were invited to join experts, media leaders and students nationwide to offer solutions and share narratives that address the climate crisis and other pressing issues in Oak 439 for Planet Forward’s 2022 Storytelling Summit!

18-22. UConn Home and Garden Center
Presentations and Outreach
The UConn Home & Garden center gave several talks on pollinators including the following speeches: "Native Bees in their Natural Habitats", "Pollinators with the Chaplin Library", "Plants for Pollinator Gardens" and "HillStead Museum Bug Walks" and 2 presentations on "Good Bug Bad Bug".

**How many pollinator-related events did your affiliate host or help with last year (in total)?**
22

**How many people attended those events (in total)?**
3642
Courses & Continuing Education


How many of your for-credit courses included pollinator-related information last year?
58

How many students attended those for-credit courses?
4167

How many of your continuing education courses included pollinator-related information last year?
6

How many participants attended those courses?
220
Service-Learning

Talia Clark, a National Resource Conservation Academy ambassador and Waterbury high school student, did free lead soil testing for the residents of Waterbury and Storrs. The UConn Home and Garden center hosted 5 talks and presentations in collaboration with a number of towns including Chaplin, Stratford, Simsbury, and Glastonbury. These presentations educated residents on the health and wellness of pollinators and the negative effect of pollinators and pesticides. Spring Valley Student Farm hosts a number of educational tours for the local communities about pollinator-friendly species and permaculture at the farm. They do so at every 'Farm Friday' and at other extra events. They hosted the UConn American English Language Institute, the Windham Community Food Network, Barrow School, Manchester Community College, Girl Scouts Brownie Troop, and UConn Student Health and Wellness. Spring Valley Student Farm also attended the 'Celebrate Mansfield Festival' where they had a booth that discussed the importance of organic farm practices. Here, they gave away over 1000 native wildflower seedlings to the local community.

How many service-learning projects did your campus host and/or support to enhance pollinator habitat on and off-campus?

12

How many students participated in service-learning projects last year to enhance pollinator habitat on or off-campus?

392

Educational Signage

No new permanent signage was installed this year. A variety of temporary signage was placed around campus advocating
for the health of pollinators. Flyers designed by the Xerces society were posted all around campus in buildings like McHugh Hall. Such spaces have high visibility so many students see and interact with these posters.

Number of permanent interpretive/educational/Bee Campus USA signs installed to date?

10

Number of temporary interpretive/educational/Bee Campus USA signs installed last year?

20

Policies & Practices

The UConn Spring Valley Student Farm (SVSF) is located about 2 miles from the Storrs campus and is a collaborative venture between Dining Services, Residential Life, EcoHouse Learning Community, First-Year Programs, the College of Agriculture, Health and Natural Resources, and the Office of Sustainability. SVSF houses 11 student farmers each year who grow crops, raise bees, and host educational events and opportunities for UConn and the local community. They use only organic methods for growing and pest management and actively work to enhance pollinator habitat through milkweed and wildflower plantings. Across the Storrs campus, UConn Landscape Services follows the UConn IPM plan, which was last updated in November 2019. The staff tries to use plant varieties that attract pollinators across different areas of campus. Recently, UConn has focused on wildflower and native plantings on Discovery Drive. They leave
unmaintained plots while also removing invasives. In the past, they have collaborated with student organizations to
develop pollinator gardens; they ask student organizations care for them over time. For their signature plantings on
campus (Mansfield island, NE island, and Gulley circle) they try to avoid pesticides/herbicides unless necessary. As
indicated in the UConn IPM plan: “Preventive herbicide applications may only be performed when the previous year's
monitoring has indicated a likelihood of weed infestation that cannot be deterred by biological pest control methods.
Preventive applications should be made only to specific problem areas, such as roadside curbs. Priority is given to those
herbicides having the lowest toxicity, taking into consideration the method and frequency of application and the risk of
exposure to building occupants.” UConn Landscape Services follows these guidelines for best practices and maintains
campus landscaping with human and pollinator health in mind.

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

- Implemented or maintained a written IPM plan
- 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

In your city or campus, are any policy initiatives underway to further protect pollinators, people or waterways from pesticides?
UConn Landscape Services follows guidance from the IPM plan, but at this time there are no policy initiatives
underway related to the use of pesticides. They did discontinue the use of neonicotinoid insecticides on the trees and
haven't been using them on the lawn, however there are times when Landscaping may do spot treatments.

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?
Our affiliate has not yet pursued training on ecologically-based IPM in the recent year, but we will try to focus on this
for the future. UConn Landscape Services last updated their IPM plan in November 2019, so this department will likely
review it again within the next few years, if not sooner.

Recommended Native Plant List: Native Pollinator Plants List CT.pdf
Recommended Native Plant Supplier List: Native Pollinator Plants Suppliers List.pdf
Wild Bloodrot for pollinators blooming just off Discovery Drive in the Hillside Environmental Education Park (HEEP).

Learn More

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