

# Bee Campus USA - Virginia Tech

Report on 2023

## Pollinator Habitat Creation & Enhancement

*Please describe pollinator habitat creation or enhancement projects in your community in 2023, and whether your committee hosted them or not.*

The Virginia Tech Bee Campus standing committee has improved the quantity and quality of pollinator habitat on campus and in the surrounding areas. All these events are coordinated and hosted by our committee. 1. Hillcrest Hall Pollinator Garden 2. Hillcrest Hall Pollinator Garden Expansion 3. Campus Roundabout 1 / Pollinator Habitat Creation 4. Campus Roundabout 2 / Pollinator Habitat Creation 5. Installation of 6 Bee Hotels around campus as part of VT Bee Day 2023 6. Stadium Woods Invasive Species Removal

*How many habitat projects did you help to create or enhance in 2023?*

6

*How many people (staff, volunteers, students, partners, etc.) helped with those projects?*

40

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

4106

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

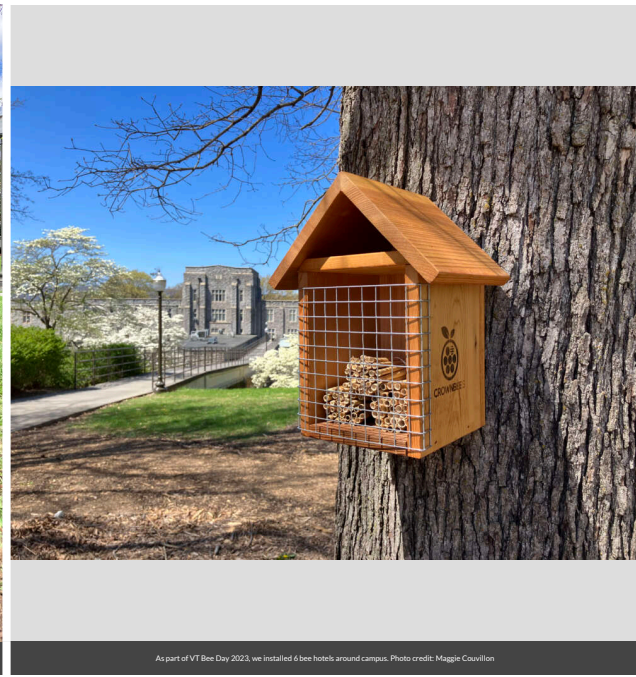
- Flower garden
- Invasive/exotic plant species removal for habitat improvement
- Native pollinator-friendly shrub border/hedgerow planting
- Other



We expanded a pollinator garden outside of Hillcrest Hall on Virginia Tech's main campus as part of VT Bee Day 2023. Photo credit: Maggie Couvillon



We expanded a pollinator garden outside of Hillcrest Hall on Virginia Tech's main campus as part of VT Bee Day 2023. Photo credit: Maggie Couvillon



As part of VT Bee Day 2023, we installed 6 bee hotels around campus. Photo credit: Maggie Couvillon

## Education & Outreach

*Please describe pollinator conservation events or outreach activities in your community in 2023, indicating whether your committee hosted them or not.*

The Virginia Tech Bee Campus standing committee has hosted various events across campus and our community. These events include educational walk-and-talks through campus gardens, planting and expansion of pollinator habitats, and invasive species removal efforts. Virginia Tech dedicates one day each Earth Week as VT Bee Day to recognize and celebrate pollinators' importance. All these events are coordinated and hosted by our committee. 1. Walk and Talk April 21, 2022 – Educational tour of Hahn Horticulture Garden including background on pollinators, their importance, and their habitats. This event served as the launch of our Bee Campus USA efforts 2. Hillcrest Planting Event April 19, 2022 – Lavender planting in partnership with Hillcrest Hall council 3. Stadium Woods Invasive Species Removal June 21, 2022 – Worked with the local Master Naturalist chapter to clear invasive species from the old growth forest on campus 4. Bee Box Installation 2023 – Installed 6 bee hotels across campus to increase pollinator habitat and nesting sites 5. Hillcrest Expansion April 17, 2023 – Expanded the size and species diversity of the Hillcrest pollinator habitat

*How many pollinator-related events or outreach activities did you host or help with in 2023 (in total)?*

7

*How many people attended those events (in total)?*

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

3

Number of temporary interpretive/educational/Bee Campus USA signs installed in 2023?

3



VT Bee Campus Standing Committee Member Chad Campbell discusses native plants for pollinators at a walk and talk through Hahn Horticulture Garden. Photo credit: Maggie Couvillon



VT Bee Campus Standing Committee Member Chad Campbell discusses native plants for pollinators at a walk and talk through Hahn Horticulture Garden. Photo credit: Maggie Couvillon



VT Bee Campus Standing Committee Member Emily Vollmer removes weeds from some one of our pollinator gardens. Photo credit Wesley Linkous

## Curriculum, Continuing Education, & Service Learning

*Please describe the curriculum your campus engaged in 2023, indicating whether it was part of a for-credit course or continuing education.*

Courses and Continuing Education Virginia Tech prides itself on offering a wide range of impactful courses. Of those, 14 relate to pollinators, their habitat, and pesticide use/management. Our high enrollment numbers in these courses highlight an acute interest in pollinators from our student body. The list is available on our website.

<https://www.vt.edu/sustainability/engagement/bee-campus-usa.html> How many students attended those for-credit courses? ALS 3404 – Ecological Agriculture Fall 2023: 23 AT 0174 – Fundamentals of Turfgrass Management Fall 2023: 40 AT 0424 – Nutrient Management Planning Fall 2023: 20 AT 0514 – Cont. Agricultural Issues Spring 2023: 17

BIOL 1064 – Plants and Civilization Fall 2023: 96 BIOL 3014 – Insect Biology Fall 2023: 47 ENT 2004 – Insects and Human Society Spring 2023: 186 Fall 2023: 54 ENT 2254 – Bees and Beekeeping Spring 2023: 56 ENT 2264 – Bees and Beekeeping Laboratory Spring 2023: 26 ENT 2804 – Bees: Biology, Diversity, and Sustainability Fall 2023: 29 ENT 4254 – Insect Pest Management Spring 2023: 18 ENT 4264 – Pesticide Usage Spring 2023: 14 Fall 2023: 10 Total enrollment for 2023: 636 The Virginia Tech Office of Sustainability worked with the Lifelong Learning Institute to host a course on Campus Sustainability. Throughout this course, attendees got to learn about our Bee Campus certification efforts, forestry and land management practices, and more.

*How many of your for-credit courses included pollinator-related information in 2023?*

14

*How many students attended those for-credit courses?*

636

*How many of your continuing education courses included pollinator-related information in 2023?*

1

*How many participants attended those courses?*

12

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

3

*How many students participated in service-learning projects in 2023 to enhance pollinator habitat on or off-campus?*

48

*Please describe the service-learning projects your students were engaged in 2023, indicating which, if any, were associated with a course.*

**We involve students in every process of creating and expanding pollinator habitat on campus. We seek input for design, we look to them to identify funding sources and locations, and we rely on them to help get these habitats planted. At every event we host, we include an educational component on the importance of pollinators, native plants, and Virginia Tech's role as a Bee Campus.**



As part of VT Bee Day 2023, we expanded some existing pollinator habitat on campus.

## Policies & Practices

*Please describe actions taken to make pest management more pollinator-friendly.*

We are actively engaged in conversations with grounds and facilities regarding these actions. Additionally, the head of grounds and the campus landscape architect are both members of our bee campus standing committee and attend our annual committee meetings.

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

The mission of the 2020 Virginia Tech Climate Action Commitment is to achieve carbon neutrality by changing the university's physical infrastructure, collective and individual behaviors, and educational mission; to engage everyone in creating a culture of sustainability; and to achieve these goals through just and equitable means. This is the university's

guiding policy on sustainability. By participating in Bee Campus USA, Virginia Tech will get closer to reaching Goals 6 and 10 of the Climate Action Commitment. Goal 6 states that Virginia Tech's agricultural, forestry, and land use operations will be carbon neutral by 2030. Goal 10 states that Virginia Tech will integrate the Climate Action Commitment into its educational mission through the Climate Action Living Laboratory. Bee Campus USA's service learning model, combined with its efforts to expand and enhance pollinator habitat through environmentally conscious means, allows us to make progress towards achieving our Climate Action Commitment goals.

*Did your committee participate in any continuing education on ecologically-based Integrated Pest Management planning?*  
Several members of our committee engage in pollinator outreach and education. Dr. James Wilson, a member of our Bee Campus Standing Committee, gave 22 outreach and extension bee talks in 2023 as part of his role as Extension Apiculturist, which reached an audience of 500+ people. Dr. Maggie Couvillon, chair of the Bee Campus Standing Committee, and members of her lab gave approximately 4 outreach and extension bee talks, reaching audiences of 200+ people. Additionally, Dr. Couvillon and members of her lab gave an additional 15 pollinator-related research presentations, reaching another 150+ people. Overall, members of our bee campus committee engaged with over 800 people in the wider regional and national community.

*Please check actions you have 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)
- Sourced plants for city or campus grounds that were not treated with neonicotinoids
- Encouraged developers and private landscapers to source plants that were not treated with neonicotinoids

*Any lessons learned you would like to share?*

This is a long term marathon, not a sprint. Establish a good committee with the relevant people at the table and set your sights on reasonable, incremental change.



VT Bee Campus Standing Committee in April 2022, after we received our certification.

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Learn More

**Integrated Pest Management Plan:**

**Recommended Native Plant List:**

**Recommended Native Plant Supplier List:**

<https://www.facilities.vt.edu/sustainability/sustainability-programs/BeeCampusUSA.html>  
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