

Bee City USA - Asheville

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.

We maintain several pollinator gardens that we have created over the years. But 2023 was a banner year for habitat creation due to the K-12 curriculum that committee member, Bryan Tompkins (biologist for the US Fish & Wildlife Service), has launched with the Science Curriculum coordinator for Buncombe County Schools. For the early grades, this program promotes the Symbolic Monarch Migration program. Bryan also started a native plant nursery in collaboration with Asheville GreenWorks, the hosting nonprofit for the Bee City USA-Asheville program. He has filled the plant bank with plants dug from our pollinator gardens and received plant donations from our partner nurseries. The bank supplies the plant material for school gardens and other community projects. Furthermore, we started a neighborhood habitat program in collaboration with the Norwood Park Neighborhood Association. We aggressively promoted our plant list and garden certification program to the neighborhood, facilitated discounted rates for plants from two nurseries, provided consulting services as requested, and gave them 1,030 milkweed plants. This annual milkweed giveaway extended to the South French Broad Neighborhood and other beneficiaries as well. Community activist, Tim Wilkins worked with Costa Farms for the 4th year in a row to award Bee City USA-Asheville (and other community groups) milkweed plants to distribute.

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

59

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

472

How many projects benefit monarchs, milkweed, or nectar plantings?

59

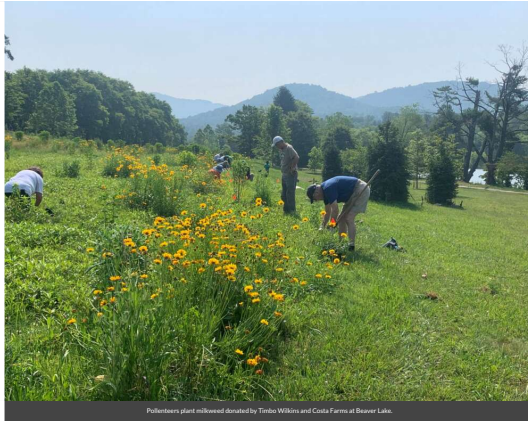
How many total square feet of habitat were created or enhanced?

1740835

Please check all that describe the habitats your affiliate helped to create or enhance in 2023 with pollinator benefit in mind.

- Flower garden

- Meadow
- Native milkweed planting for monarchs and bees (where appropriate)
- Native pollinator-friendly shrub border/hedgerow planting
- School garden



Education & Outreach

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

Each winter, we host the Great Buzz Gathering to showcase pollinator conservation activities of note and encourage collaboration, and each June, we host Pollination Celebration! month promoting a variety of events, some of which we host. For example, we hosted a scavenger hunt for foods that required a pollinator's help at the tailgate market, featured a pollinator garden with educators and pollinator trivia at a major garden tour, and hosted a pollinator safari. Throughout the year, we manage the Pollinator Habitat Certification program which requires applicants to indicate what they manage or have planted from our Recommended Native Species list for Western North Carolina as well as their pest management and nesting habitat activity. We also make presentations to garden clubs and other community groups on request. For the first time, we had a Pollenteer Holiday Potluck in December where we announced an exciting new project and premiered *The Pollinating Game*, a scripted play in ten rounds (with an intermission), in which flowers query three prospective pollinators to find the pollinator of their dreams. Based on the old TV game show, *The Dating Game*, the flowers cannot see the pollinators until they make their choices. The intent of the play is to illustrate pollinator "syndromes."

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

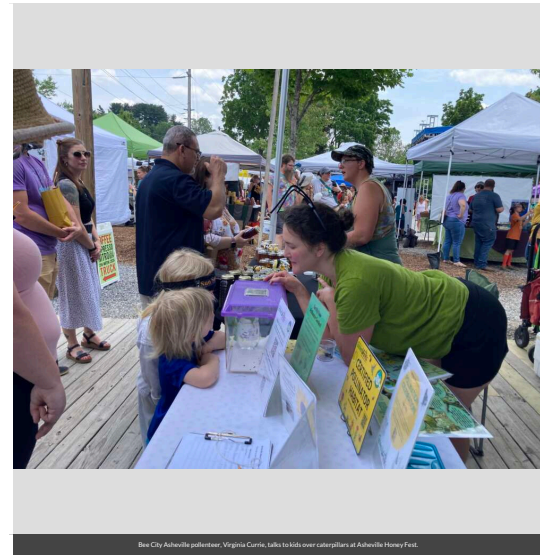
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How many people attended those events (in total)?

3041

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

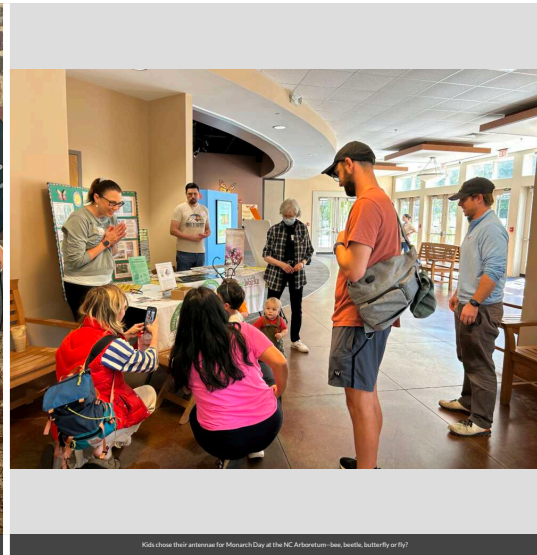
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Bee City Asheville pollinator, Virginia Curtis, talks to kids over caterpillars at Asheville Honey Fest.



Get Buzzed for Pollinators fundraiser event courtesy of Anthony Gathreller & Jackie Dirschel of Mosaic Reality.



Kids choose their antennae for Monarch Day at the NC Arboretum- bee, beetle, butterfly or fly?



Bee City USA founder, Phyllis Stiles, with 1st BCU sign in nation, joined by Corbin and Alena Sledge.

Policies & Practices

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

Our plant list includes the pollinator-friendly pest management practices of each nursery listed and we talk about reducing pesticide use in nearly every presentation we make. While the City of Asheville does not yet have a pollinator-friendly IPM plan, we continue to encourage them to do so, offering our assistance in developing the plan.

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

Our committee continues to encourage the City of Asheville to develop an IPM plan that will protect pollinators, people and waterways from pesticides.

Did your committee participate in any continuing education on ecologically-based Integrated Pest Management planning?

A few members of our committee have watched Xerces and Bee City USA webinars regarding ecologically-based Integrated Pest Management planning. We announced a Certified Pollinator Advocate series of monthly classes in

2024 that will include a class in May called, “Preventing Mosquito Outbreaks to Protect Pollinators,” and a class in August called, “Pollinator-Friendly Pest Management.” Graduates of the series must assist with at least one habitat project and one outreach event to be certified. They will be added to our “pollenteer” list to help with future activities.

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 using “Buying Bee-Safe Plants” methods recommended by Xerces Society. (See <https://xerces.org/publications/fact-sheets/buying-bee-safe-plants>)
- Encouraged developers and private landscapers to source plants using “Buying Bee-Safe Plants” methods recommended by Xerces Society. (See <https://xerces.org/publications/fact-sheets/buying-bee-safe-plants>)

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 plant and supplier list also includes native plant-friendly landscapers. Moreover, our pollinator habitat certification application asks applicants—both residential and business— to indicate whether they use any pesticides and, if so, specifically why and how. Almost every applicant reports that they use almost no pesticides and the feedback we receive on the application process is that it is very educational.

Any lessons learned you would like to share?

Collaboration is our best friend. Almost all our success is due to volunteers. We raised very little funding. Were it not for collaborating with other organizations and businesses, we could not reach nearly as many people.



Most members of the Bee City Asheville Leadership Committee members for 2023.

Learn More

Integrated Pest Management Plan:

Recommended Native Plant List: [BCU-AVL Plant Species & Supplier List 4-24.pdf](#)

<https://beecityasheville.org/native-plants>

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