

Bee City USA - Charleston

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 worked to conserve native pollinators by increasing the abundance of native plants, providing nesting sites, and reducing the use of pesticides. Our events were focused on the creation or enhancement of pollinator habitats on public and private land. We established a native plant garden at a concrete skate park to attract beneficial pollinators and prevent erosion on the hillside. Plugs planted include wildflowers in the sunflower family and milkweed to attract monarch butterflies. 500 sq ft was planted with 150 plant plugs. We created a pollinator habitat at a fish hatchery by planting native plants along fence line of the hatchery entrance. 3000 sq ft was planted with 500 plant plugs. We established a native pollinator garden in an area that was formerly used as an agricultural field, now turned multi-purpose use lawn for recreation. 1000 sq ft was planted with 1000 plant plugs. Finally, we established a native pollinator garden to benefit pollinators and stabilize the hillside that is prone to erosion. 500 sq ft was planted with 300 plant plugs.

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

4

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

57

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

4

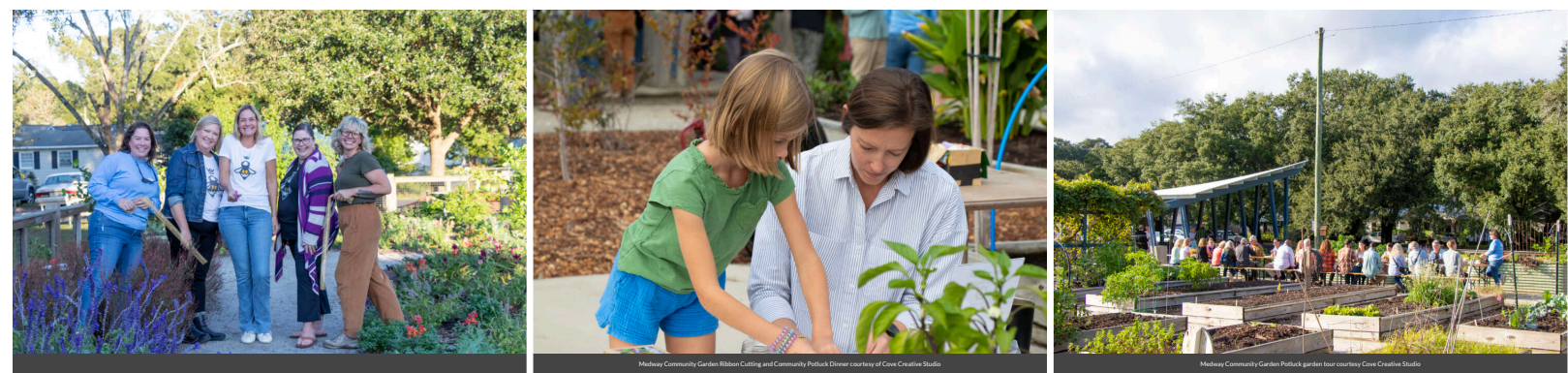
How many total square feet of habitat were created or enhanced?

26280

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

- Flower garden
- Vegetable garden
- Orchard

- Meadow
- Pollinator-friendly lawn (with flowering clover, dandelions...)
- Herb garden
- Native pollinator-friendly tree planting
- Native pollinator-friendly shrub border/hedgerow planting
- Roadside/rights of way 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.

We hosted a variety of activities to bring awareness to pollinator habitat preservation and creation. Our events ranged from a community potluck and ribbon cutting at our new pollinator garden located at the Medway Community Garden. The residents of the neighborhood happily came with food and drink to enjoy the community garden. It is a community staple and it was the perfect way to engage the community and get them to think about pollinators as they plant their fruits, vegetables, and herbs. This was also a great time to remind the community about pesticide use and natural alternatives. Other events included a focus on beekeeping and honey extraction which brought the conversation to pollinators as a whole. These kinds of conversations allow us to pivot to a call to action to protect pollinators. The public loves to know ways they can help. Another event was a celebration of our local pollinators, we hosted a “Parks For Pollinators Bio Blitz”. This volunteer event helped create a snapshot of the variety of pollinators present in our local parks. Volunteers used their smartphones, and the free iNaturalist app, to take photos and document pollinators and plants. All participants received a free Bee City USA T-shirt!

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)?

590



BioBlitz Event courtesy of Keep Charleston Beautiful



Volunteers at BioBlitz event courtesy of Keep Charleston Beautiful

Policies & Practices

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

Charleston Parks Conservancy managed park spaces limit all chemical applications to control potential pests/weeds. The organization utilizes volunteers to remove invasives, manage beds, and choose plants that naturally deter certain

pests from overtaking other plants in the area. City Parks does not use “broad application” products, meant to target multiple species of insects at once. I don’t have more info from Parks regarding types of chemicals used and how, but we can dive into this further with them this year. George has been helpful in giving us some information, but I need to get it in a written document we can reference.

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

Not at this time. Charleston Waterkeeper was working on a study to collect information regarding pesticides in our waterways, but the research is not completed. Although there are no city-wide policies in place, our organization follows our own set of best practices.

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

Our affiliate does not offer continuing education nor have we participated in any courses. We do not have the infrastructure to incorporate this into our programming on a consistent basis. We hope to make that a goal in 2024. Board members have participated in webinars provided through Xerces Society related to the Bee City USA Program. Members of the Charleston City Parks horticultural team have attended perennial based conferences that discuss best practices and IPM. Each board member has attended conferences on different aspects of pollinator health and habitat sustainability through their parent organization. We hope to create a more formalized opportunities for our affiliate members to attend lectures, conferences, and take advantage of continuing education courses.

Please check actions you have taken to make pest management practices more pollinator-friendly.

- Reduced the total area of city or campus-managed lands to which pesticides are applied
- Restricted pesticides used to organic pesticides on city or campus grounds

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.

We have partners throughout the community. Clemson Extension has a Carolina Yards Program which encourage residents to utilize sustainable, eco-friendly practices in their yards. Keep Charleston Beautiful works throughout the year to share educational information with citizens regarding best practices for yard maintenance and planting practices. At this time we have not reached out to businesses or landscapers. Additionally, Charleston Parks Conservancy has implemented a "Pollinator Caretaker" program that teaches community members how to care for spaces like this in their own yards.

Any lessons learned you would like to share?

Collaboration is key, and having multiple organizations pushing for the same objective is more helpful than trying to make changes internally. Advocates, allies, and community stakeholders are becoming the key to sustainable change in our city. We rely on messaging, community engagement, and public education as you are building a project are

instrumental in the success. Community engagement is our number one priority.

Learn More

Integrated Pest Management Plan:

Recommended Native Plant List:

<https://www.charleston-sc.gov/2621/Pollinator-Plants-for-the-Southeast-Regi>

Recommended Native Plant Supplier List:

<https://www.charleston-sc.gov/2621/Pollinator-Plants-for-the-Southeast-Regi>

<https://www.charleston-sc.gov/2619/Bee-City-USA-Pollinator-Program>
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