

Bee City USA - Decatur

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.

Eight community volunteer work/maintenance days were held at our two pollinator habitats in 2023. Many of our volunteers are members of the Dekalb County Master Gardener Extension program. This year, we were also fortunate to be joined by Girl Scouts and their leaders from Oakhurst Troop 16191. As these two sites mature, the work has become less about installing plants and more about maintaining those that have established themselves and rearranging plants due to sun or soil conditions. In some cases we're expanding planting areas often using plants propagated on site.

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

2

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

17

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

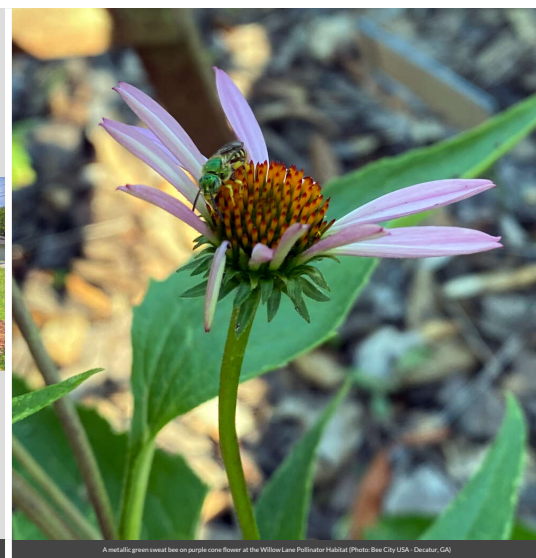
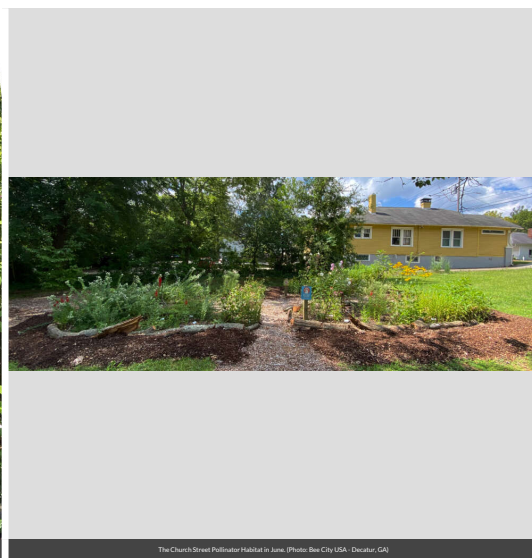
2

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

54450

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

- Flower garden
- Pollinator-friendly lawn (with flowering clover, dandelions...)
- Native milkweed planting for monarchs and bees (where appropriate)
- Invasive/exotic plant species removal for habitat improvement
- Native pollinator-friendly tree planting



Education & Outreach

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

We began the year with a presentation on native bees to nine gardener members of the Flair Forest Garden Club. Publicity was done and yard signs ordered in preparation for Decatur's first No Mow March, an event embraced by residents in its inaugural year. In support, we tabled at the Saturday morning Oakhurst Farmers Market, giving away No Mow March signs, answering bee-related questions, and distributing literature. We also generated \$100 of financial support selling mosquito spraying yard signs, mason bee houses, and A Bee C books. March was a busy month for school presentations. Bees and Other Pollinators was the topic of in-person talks given to kindergarteners at Oakhurst, Glenwood, and Winnona Park elementary schools in support of their entomology unit – 11 kindergarten classrooms total. A Zoom presentation on Pollinator Pathways was also given to North Hall High School's Directed Studies Program students. We also held our annual Mason Bee House workshop, presented in conjunction with our fiscal sponsor Wyld Center, at their Edgewood Community Learning Garden. In April, we tabled as part of City of Decatur's annual celebration of Earth Day on the downtown square, and again as part of the Georgia Native Plant Society's annual spring plant swap. Much of our work each year is in preparation for our annual festival marking National Pollinator Week. 2023 was our biggest and best festival yet – bringing together more than 30 environmental organizations on the downtown square for a day of fun and awareness building. There was music, facepainting, popsicle and mead vendors, a lemonade stand and more. Later that summer, in advance of August's Great Southeast Pollinator Census, we met with members of our partner Girl Scout Troop (Oakhurst 16191) to talk about Pollinator Diversity in Decatur. That same presentation was also later given to 7th and 8th grade students at the Museum School in nearby Avondale Estates. In September, we returned to the Oakhurst Farmers Market for another tabling event. We also assisted with local leg-work for a Mosquito Spraying Residue Sampling Survey being conducted by Xerces Society and

university entomologist researchers. Each November, City Schools of Decatur second graders do a unit on bees. So we were called upon to make presentations in seven classrooms at Winnona Park and Glenwood elementary schools. We met four times in-person as a committee throughout the year and, in November, hosted a volunteer appreciation brunch for our Master Gardener and Girl Scout volunteers. A total of 11 email newsletters were sent to our member-subscriber list of 565 people.

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

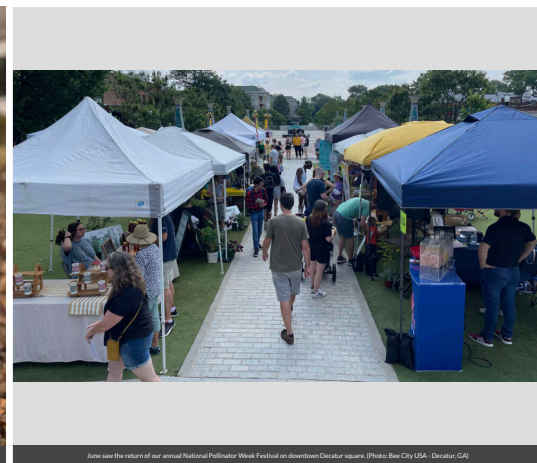
27

How many people attended those events (in total)?

900

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

2





Policies & Practices

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

The bulk of our advocacy and outreach on pest management are educational initiatives aimed at residents. We produce and distribute literature and signs around the theme of "Mosquito Spraying Kills Bees (and other beneficial insect species)." This campaign is reinforced via our website and social media platforms, as well as by in-person talks and presentations. During the year, we also met with concerned parents from elementary schools where mosquito spraying events took place, and met with the city's newly hired Urban Ecologist to discuss ways in which we can work together to help the city establish clear policies and best practices related to pest management.

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

This is a topic of on-going conversation with our city liaison and other key stakeholders, like the newly-hired position of Urban Ecologist. We're optimistic about making headway on this front in 2024.

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

Generally speaking, when asked about pest control (usually mosquitoes), we always emphasize that chemical controls should be an option of last resort, used only after a variety of other options have been tried first.

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.

Yes. In addition to our ongoing advocacy around residential mosquito spraying's harmful effects on beneficial insect populations, we also this year assisted locally with a Xerces-led mosquito spraying residue sampling survey. Our participation included helping to recruit resident property owners as sampling sites, distributing and collecting sampling bands, and returning frozen samples for lab analysis.

Any lessons learned you would like to share?

Working with city leadership can sometimes be a long and slow process!

Learn More

Integrated Pest Management Plan:

Recommended Native Plant List: [NATIVE PLANT LISTS_becatur.pdf](#)

<https://www.beecaturga.com/native-plant-lists>

Recommended Native Plant Supplier List: [NATIVE PLANT GROWERS_beecatur.pdf](#)

<https://www.becaturga.com/native-plant-growers>

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