

Bee City USA - Howard County

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.

Howard County Bee City helped install a pollinator garden in Harper's Choice Village Center. We partnered with Harper's Choice CARES, Columbia Association, and Dentsu to install 200 native plants at Kahler Hall in Joseph Square. This project exemplifies the power of partnerships and working towards a shared goal to protect and sustain pollinators in Howard County. The space now provides food, shelter, and nesting sites for pollinators and other wildlife, while also highlighting the beauty of native plants. Just as we finished the planting, a resident appeared on her balcony overlooking the area to say thank you for giving her something beautiful to enjoy. Another project to highlight is our collaborate with Howard Community College and the Environmental Club President to establish two soft landings on the HCC campus, adjacent to the pre-existing pollinator trail. Soft Landings involve planting native species beneath indigenous trees, fostering habitats for local insects. By introducing ground cover beneath the tree canopy, native plants offer a welcoming environment for caterpillars and butterflies, thus providing a beneficial micro-ecosystem. This concept, pioneered by author Heather Holm, aims to enhance gardening practices by creating favorable conditions for biodiversity. The planting areas are highly visible, and offer a demonstration of this sustainable landscaping practice. We are working with the college to develop signage for the area and pollinator trail.

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?

56

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

2

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

300

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

- Meadow

- Native pollinator-friendly tree planting



HCC Soft Landings planting (Julie Costantino)



Harper's Choice Planting (Julie Costantino)



Harper's Choice Planting Denton volunteer team (Julie Costantino)

Education & Outreach

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

In 2023, Howard County Bee City organized a series of outreach events during National Pollinator Week to engage the community in pollinator conservation efforts. Families enjoyed a StoryWalk® at Middle Patuxent Environmental Area, where they explored "Flower Talk: How Plants Use Color to Communicate" by Sara Levine, illustrated by Masha D'yans, along meadows and forests. Participants also joined short butterfly walks at the Howard County Conservancy, observing various species, including the Banded and Coral Hairstreaks. Howard EcoWorks hosted activities where attendees made seed bombs and potted plants, learning about the importance of native plants for pollinators. At Robinson Nature Center, people engaged in native seed "bomb" making and crafts, promoting environmental education and supporting pollinator habitats. Additionally, the Howard County Conservancy hosted a pollinator celebration featuring informative stations and interactive activities, deepening participants' understanding of pollinator ecology and conservation. Outside of Pollinator Week, Howard County Bee City organized the second annual Violet Contest, highlighting the value of native violets, and collaborated with local organizations to replant a landscape bed with pollinator-friendly plants, aiming to enhance habitat availability and promote sustainable landscaping practices within the community. We also developed a new outreach effort, Native Bee Trading Cards, to engage with more kids and help them learn about the diversity of native bees in Maryland, and Howard County in particular. Our Chesapeake Conservation and Climate Corps member introduced the first set of 15 cards during

Sustainability Day at Howard Community College. For the second year in a row we held the Native Bee ID workshop which consists of a classroom hands on component, as well as an outdoor portion where participants learned how to capture bees in the field for a quick ID and release. In 2023, Howard County Bee City held the second annual Trees for Bees giveaway, emphasizing the critical role of native trees and shrubs in bolstering pollinator populations, particularly during the spring season. This initiative offered a diverse selection of native plants carefully chosen to provide essential resources like pollen, nectar, food, and shelter for native bees, butterflies, and other wildlife. By distributing free native trees and shrubs to participants, the program not only contributed to enhancing outdoor spaces but also facilitated habitat restoration efforts and promoted biodiversity in the Chesapeake Bay region. Through the Trees for Bees program, Howard County Bee City aimed to raise awareness about the significance of native plants for pollinator conservation and inspire community members to take proactive steps towards creating greener, more sustainable environments.

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

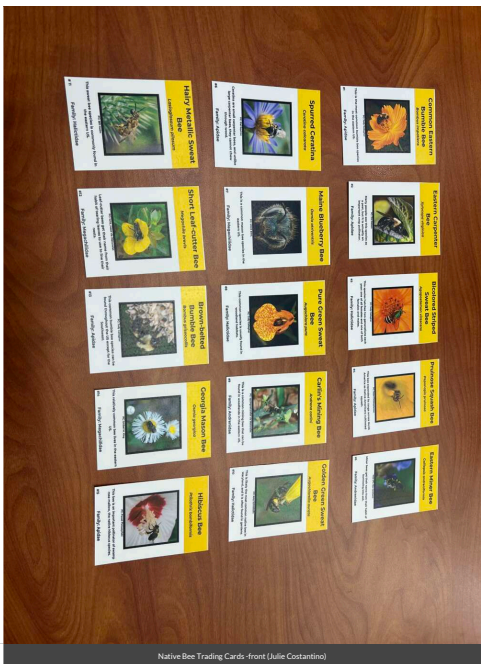
19

How many people attended those events (in total)?

2045

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

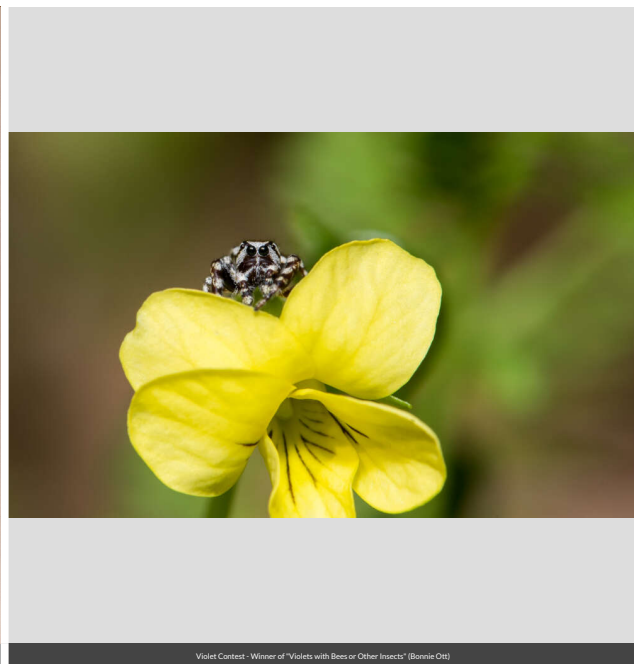
2



Native Bee Trading Cards- front (Julie Costantino)



Native Bee Trading Cards- back (Julie Costantino)



Violet Contest - Winner of "Violets with Bees or Other Insects" (Bonnie Ott)

Policies & Practices

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

We developed a strategy to educate the community about the negative impacts of residential mosquito spraying. This is a targeted outreach and education campaign that will be implemented in 2024 which will consist of presentations, social media content and print materials for tabling events. This is in addition to previously taken actions which include an update to the County's pesticide policy in 2020 and the "Stop Mosquito Spraying" flyers that were developed with help of Bee City affiliate BeeCatur, GA.

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

Not currently.

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

No

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

- Implemented or maintained a written IPM plan
- Only use pesticides as a last resort within the 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)
- Eliminated use of neonicotinoid insecticides on city or campus grounds
- Distributed educational materials to residents or students to encourage the reduction or elimination of pesticide use

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.

There was an increased interest from the community to start neighborhood-led efforts and we have offered to support and collaborate with those individuals whenever possible.

Any lessons learned you would like to share?

Not at this time

Learn More

Integrated Pest Management Plan: [Pesticide-Use-on-County-Property-rev.-10.22.19.pdf](#)

Recommended Native Plant List: [Howard County Native Plants.xlsx](#)

<https://livegreenhoward.com/land/pollinators/>

Recommended Native Plant Supplier List: [Native Plant Suppliers During Coronavirus.pdf](#)

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