

Bee Campus USA - University of Connecticut

Report on 2024

Pollinator Habitat Creation & Enhancement

Please describe pollinator habitat creation or enhancement projects in your community in 2024, and whether your committee hosted them or not.

All projects listed below were hosted by groups and organizations that have representatives on our UConn Bee Campus Committee and/or participate in pollinator-related outreach and education within our UConn campus and local communities. The Office of Sustainability hosted a Hillside Environmental Education Park (HEEP) Trail Cleanup event on April 26, September 11th and October 18th. During these events, interns worked to maintain the trail by removing invasive species. Mansfield Litter Cleanup is an event hosted in partnership with the Mansfield town community on 11/16/2024 to clean up UConn's campus and surrounding areas. Several EcoCaptain Interns from the UConn Office of Sustainability also held clean up events during 2024. These clean up events were held on 9/29/24 and 10/12/24. Litter cleanups are important to protect species and native habitats. Additionally, removing invasive species helps protect pollinators who rely on native habitats.

How many habitat projects did you help to create or enhance in 2024?

5

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

404

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

4

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

14350

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

- Flower garden
- Vegetable garden
- Natural area with tree snags and stumps, and bare areas for ground nesting species
- Native milkweed planting for monarchs and bees (where appropriate)

- Invasive/exotic plant species removal for habitat improvement
- Native pollinator-friendly tree planting
- Native pollinator-friendly shrub border/hedgerow planting
- Rain garden/bioswale
- School garden



Student Farmer mulching UConn Community Garden, Fall 2024 (photo credit: Spring Valley Student Farm)



Cleaning up invasive shrubs at SVSF (photo credit: Spring Valley Student Farm)



Setting up the rain garden at the UConn Dairy Bar (photo credit: Amanda Stowe)

Education & Outreach

Please describe pollinator conservation events or outreach activities in your community in 2024, indicating whether your committee hosted them or not.

All events listed below were hosted by groups and organizations that have representatives on our UConn Bee Campus Committee and/or participate in pollinator-related outreach and education within our UConn campus and local communities. 1. Student farmers from Spring Valley Student Farm (SVSF) hosted 24 hours of UConn Community Garden Volunteer Days with an estimated 200 student volunteers during 2024. These events occurred on various Saturdays and Sundays during the semester from 12-3pm. Volunteers helped maintain and improve the permaculture garden through weeding, mulching, planting, and pruning perennial plants. The garden also served as a largely educational space, where students could learn about and implement sustainable permaculture practices. 2. SVSF hosts Farm Friday every Friday during the parts of the semester that fall within the warm growing season (March, April,

September, October). Farm Friday is an opportunity for UConn students to gain a variety of valuable experiences within the SVSF grounds. Activities during Farm Friday include seed planting, crop harvesting, pollinator bed maintenance, or even the ability to work with more specialized projects such as aquaponics. SVSF works in collaboration with EcoHouse Learning Community to gather volunteers to give them the opportunity to learn about sustainable agriculture and gain skills they normally would not be able to in a classroom setting. In Spring 2024, we hosted 134 individual volunteers (some of whom visited several times to volunteer), for a total of 308 volunteer hours. In Fall 2024, we hosted 255 student volunteers for a total of 550 volunteer hours. This is a total of 858 volunteer hours.

3. The Edible Forest Garden (EFG) at Spring Valley Student Farm is a cultivated garden of perennial trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants providing food for humans and habitat and nectar for pollinators. This diverse system replicates a forest structure and sustains itself through the many ecological roles played by each individual species. Student farmers and volunteers maintain the EFG by removing invasive plants, installing new plants, and building and maintaining trails. Student farmers contributed about 200 hours of volunteer work to maintain the EFG this year.

4. Each year, Spring Valley Student Farm grows hundreds of annual flower seedlings to give away at UConn's Earth Day Spring Fling (<https://sustainability.uconn.edu/earth-day-spring-fling/>). In 2024, they grew 458 marigold seedlings. Seedlings were distributed in paper pots made by the student farmers out of recycled newspaper, and participants were invited to pot up their own plant or request that we pot it up for them. SVSF also provided instructions for care and planting outside and invited participants to visit the farm.

5. Insect Wonders at the Farm is an annual event that is part of Bug Week at UConn. This year SVSF set up several activities: a presentation on honeybees and working with hives; a Jeopardy!-style game for children about pollinators and honeybees; a scavenger hunt for different types of bugs and beneficial insects that could be found on the farm, and bug-themed arts and crafts. Insect Wonders at the Farm is a family-oriented event and was attended by a handful of community members around CT (children and adults). There were 4 designated student farmer volunteers working stations, as well as several other student farmers completing farm tasks in the field but were also interacting with the families and helping them find bugs.

How many pollinator-related events or outreach activities did you host or help with in 2024 (in total)?

30

How many people attended those events (in total)?

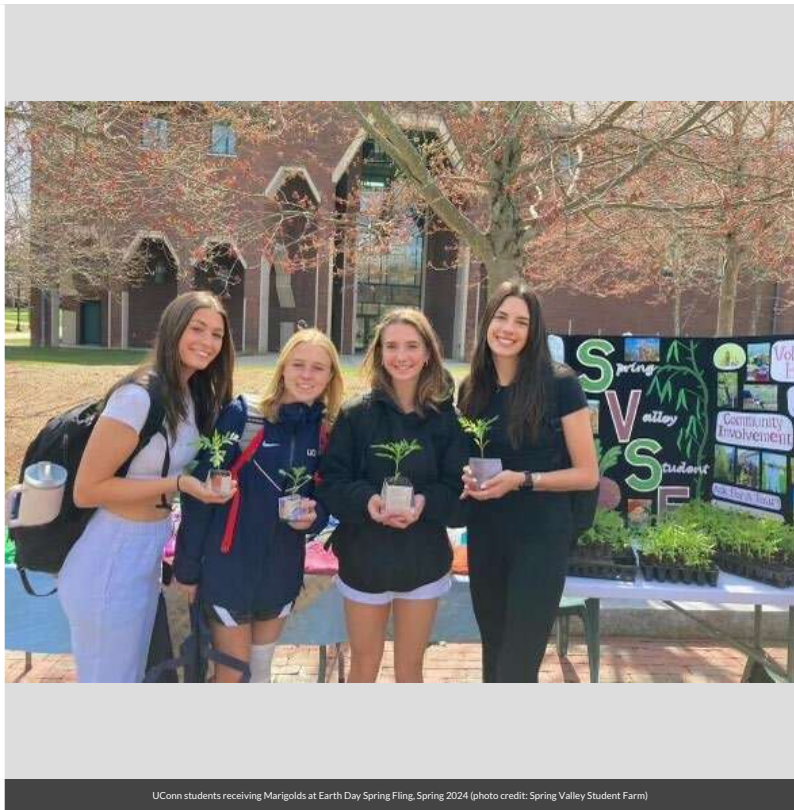
718

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

10



Student Farmers leading Bug Jeopardy at Insect Wonders, Summer 2024 (photo credit: Spring Valley Student Farm)



UConn students receiving Marigolds at Earth Day Spring Fling, Spring 2024 (photo credit: Spring Valley Student Farm)

Curriculum, Continuing Education, & Service Learning

Please describe the curriculum your campus engaged in 2024, indicating whether it was part of a for-credit course or continuing education.

All of the following are for-credit courses: ANTH 1010E: Global Climate Change and Human Societies ANTH 1010E: Global Climate Change and Human Societies ANTH 3340E Culture and Conservation BIOL 1108 BIOL 1108 BIOL 1108 BIOL 1108 BIOL 1110 EEB 2245 EEB 2245 EEB 3220 EEB 3256 EEB 3569 EDLR 1161 EDLR 1162 ENVS 2000 ENVS 2000 GEOG 2400E GEOG 2400E EEB 2100E EEB 2100E EEB 2208E EEB 2222E EEB 2244E EEB 2244E GEOG 3410E HIST 2570 HRTS 4291 HRTS 4291 NRE 1000E NRE 1000E NRE 2455 NRE 2600 NRE 4000W NRE 4475 NUSC 1167 NUSC 1167 PHIL 3216E SOCI 2705E SPSS 1060 SPSS 2100E SPSS 2110W SPSS 3610 SPSS 3840 NRE 4695
Special Topics: Environmental Storytelling

How many of your for-credit courses included pollinator-related information in 2024?

45

How many students attended those for-credit courses?

3555

Please describe the service-learning projects your students were engaged in 2024, indicating which, if any, were associated with a course.

The service-learning projects that students were engaged in during 2024 were the installation of a rain garden at the UConn Dairy Bar, Farm Fridays at Spring Valley Student Farm, enhancement of the UConn Community Garden, and updates to the Edible Forest Garden. A group of students installed a rain garden at the UConn Dairy Bar on April 19, 2024. This rain garden was 250 square feet and had 15 volunteers. This project was associated with the course ANTH 3340E: Culture and Conservation. SVSF hosts Farm Friday every Friday during the parts of the semester that fall within the warm growing season (March, April, September, October). Farm Friday is an opportunity for UConn students to gain a variety of valuable experiences within the SVSF grounds. Activities during Farm Friday include seed planting, crop harvesting, pollinator bed maintenance, or even the ability to work with more specialized projects such as aquaponics. SVSF works in collaboration with EcoHouse Learning Community to gather volunteers to give them the opportunity to learn about sustainable agriculture and gain skills they normally would not be able to in a classroom setting. Maintenance and updates were also made to the UConn Community Garden. Volunteers helped maintain and improve the permaculture garden through weeding, mulching, planting, and pruning perennial plants. The garden also served as a largely educational space, where students could learn about and implement sustainable permaculture practices. The Edible Forest Garden (EFG) at Spring Valley Student Farm is a cultivated garden of perennial trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants providing food for humans and habitat and nectar for pollinators. This diverse system replicates a forest structure and sustains itself through the many ecological roles played by each individual species. Student farmers and volunteers maintain the EFG by removing invasive plants, installing new plants, and building and maintaining trails.

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

5

How many students participated in service-learning projects in 2024 to enhance pollinator habitat on or off-campus?

404



Student Farmer leading Farm Friday volunteers on a tour, Fall 2024 (photo credit: Spring Valley Student Farm)



Caterpillar returns after native habitat is restored at Dairy Bar Rain Garden (Photo credit: Amanda Stowe)



Bee pollinates flower after rain garden installation at UConn Dairy Bar (photo credit: Amanda Stowe)

Policies & Practices

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

Spring Valley Student Farm (SVSF) grows a wide variety of edible plants, cover crops, and native wildflowers that SVSF leaves unmanaged throughout the growing season, with crop rotation and intercropping methods. This ensures that there are always plants in bloom at Spring Valley Student Farm, and as such there is always a source of nectar and pollen to feed pollinators. This can include beds cover-cropped with blooming buckwheat, and then later the buckwheat gets mown and the bed is re-planted with a different vegetable that will be in bloom soon, such as summer squash, beans, or peas. SVSF also has a significant portion of our space that is less ideal for growing vegetables and fruits dedicated to the growth of wildflowers, such as aster, goldenrod, milkweed, and black-eyed susan. These spaces are not suited for vegetables due to either being too steep, rocky, or any other factor, but they work well for wildflowers because they do not need to be mown and are far more tolerant of less-than-ideal soil conditions. These plants have variable flowering seasons, providing nourishment for adult pollinators and food for caterpillars and larvae. SVSF also does not destroy native wildflowers when they begin growing in a place where they can't stay, such as the middle of a bed. When this happens, depending on the species of wildflower that is being removed, SVSF will either move it to a more convenient location, such as into one of the pollinator beds, or in the case of plants that have long runners or are easily divided, SVSF will pot them up to sell at our farm market as a pollinator-friendly plant for people to grow in their own yards. Additionally, in 2024 the farm started cold stratification for over a thousand seeds of various native wildflowers —such as foxglove, purple coneflower, mountain mint, and anise hyssop — to further enhance our pollinator habitat and expand our biodiversity at the farm.

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

UConn Landscape Services follows guidance from the IPM plan, but at this time there are no policy initiatives underway related to the use of pesticides.

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

Our affiliate has not yet pursued training on ecologically-based IPM in the recent year, but we will try to focus on this for the future. UConn Landscape Services last updated their IPM plan in November 2019, so this department will likely review it again within the next few years, if not sooner.

Any lessons learned you would like to share?

Student service-learning projects related to pollinators are great for raising awareness about the importance of sustainability and conserving pollinator habitat, especially among university administration.

Committee Photo

Learn More

Integrated Pest Management Plan: [UConn IPM Plan Nov 2019.pdf](#)

https://ecohusky.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/2041/2020/02/UConn-IPM-turf-and-ornamental-Final_112019.pdf

Recommended Native Plant List: [Native Pollinator Plants List CT.pdf](#)

<https://nenativeplants.psla.uconn.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/3415/2021/11/Some-Pollinator-Plants-for-Connecticut..pdf>

Recommended Native Plant Supplier List: [Native Pollinator Plants Suppliers List.pdf](#)

https://beecityusa.org/wp-content/uploads/ultimatemember/187/file_c8f6bbcc_fc14cf79d2d6ad62e69fe9eed72edf5b3869086.pdf

<https://sustainability.uconn.edu/operations/grounds/sustainability@uconn.edu>

<https://www.instagram.com/uconnos/?hl=en>

<https://www.facebook.com/UConnOS>