Bee Campus USA - University of Illinois at Chicago

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.

UIC Heritage Garden's Native Prairie: Enhancing Biodiversity and Supporting Pollinators The UIC Heritage Garden features a native prairie that plays a crucial role in supporting local biodiversity and providing essential habitats for pollinators. Located between University Hall and the Behavioral Sciences Building, this prairie is part of UIC's commitment to environmental sustainability and cultural diversity. Native prairies like this one offer significant benefits, including improved stormwater management through deep-rooted plants that absorb excess rainwater, thereby reducing urban flooding. Additionally, these prairies enhance air quality by sequestering carbon dioxide, contributing to climate change mitigation. The Heritage Garden's native prairie not only enriches the campus ecosystem but also serves as a living laboratory for students and community members to learn about the importance of native plants and their role in sustaining pollinator populations. Polk Street Residence Hall Courtyard Garden At the Polk Street Residence Hall, 1933 W. Polk Street, an innovative pollinator-friendly garden flourishes in a sunken courtyard, defying the challenge of limited sunlight. This verdant oasis showcases a tapestry of resilient perennial plants carefully curated to thrive in low-light conditions, transforming the courtyard into a haven for biodiversity. Designed with sustainability in mind, the garden serves as a stormwater absorption hub, efficiently managing rainwater runoff. Native plants dominate the landscape, providing crucial sustenance for pollinators. The strategic arrangement of flora fosters a harmonious ecosystem, supporting diverse insect species that contribute to the local biodiversity. Beyond its environmental benefits, the garden serves as an educational focal point in student life and teaches students about the importance of ecological resilience. This sunken courtyard, once an overlooked space, now stands as a testament to the university's commitment to sustainability and ecological stewardship, fostering a vibrant and resilient microcosm in the heart of campus life.

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

3

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

20

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

3

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

11272

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

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

Pollinator-friendly green space near the Behavioral Sciences Building.

Education & Outreach

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

Bee Workshop Meet & Greet On March 27, 2024, the UIC Greenhouse hosted the Bee Workshop Meet & Greet, providing students with an opportunity to learn about beekeeping and native insect habitats. The event covered topics such as pollinator habitats, honey and beeswax production and insect biodiversity, fostering engagement in sustainable

practices and ecological awareness. Honeybee 101 Seminar at Gallery 400 On April 18, 2024, Gallery 400 hosted a Honeybee 101 Seminar. This event was open to all UIC students and staff, providing an opportunity to learn about honeybee biology, beekeeping practices and the importance of pollinators in our ecosystem. A Positive Change for Bumblebees Webinar On June 18, 2024, The Energy Resources Center (ERC) at the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) hosted a webinar titled "A Positive Change for Biodiversity: A New Bumble Bee Conservation Agreement." This event focused on the development of a national voluntary conservation benefit agreement (CBA) aimed at providing habitat for seven species of at-risk bumblebees. The initiative is a collaboration between UIC, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and various energy and transportation industry organizations. The webinar addressed the importance of these at-risk species, which have experienced significant population declines and discussed conservation efforts to support their survival.

How many pollinator-related events or outreach activities did you host or help with in 2024 (in total)?
3

How many people attended those events (in total)?
200

Number of permanent interpretive/educational/Bee Campus USA signs installed to date?
7

Number of temporary interpretive/educational/Bee Campus USA signs installed in 2024?
1

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A water feature was added near the hives to keep the bees hydrated and signs were posted around the garden to educate visitors about the bees' role.

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.

In Bios 120, a for-majors, required, undergraduate course which includes about 1,200 students per year, there is a lecture on the Biology of Pollinators. This covers pollination syndromes, the basics of how pollination works and the major groups of pollinators – including several families of bees. In Bios 340, Environmental Physiology, students read a paper on the thermal ecology of neotropical stingless bees. There is also some lecture material dedicated to the physiology of insects, and the chemical ecology of deceptive pollination. In Bios 294, Insect Evolution and Biodiversity, there is a two-week unit on the biology of pollinators, extensive readings on pollinator conservation, including the threatened Aztec bee and the non-honeybee Apia and new readings on how honeybees harm native pollinator networks. In Bios 431, Plant-Animal Interactions, there is a two-week unit on the biology of pollinators (not the same material), a lot of discussion of how pollinator networks function, and some new reading about how native honey bees in natural areas negatively impact biodiversity. In Bios 305, Plant Evolution and Ecology, there is a fair amount of material on the history of pollination. Next year, the prairie will be open to the public for a Bee Tour. In Bios 365, Human Ecological Systems, urban pollinators are addressed for approximately 1 ½ weeks. In Bios 437, Topics in Tropical Ecology, a unit covers the production of coffee beans with a focus on how pollinator health in coffee growing regions is influenced by the method of coffee plantation that is employed. In Bios 184, Basics of Neuroscience, students are introduced to the basics of bee eusociality and behavior. The relationship between bee behavior and local ecology is discussed with an emphasis placed on the importance of bees in urban environments. In Bios 236, Animal Behavior, students are also introduced to the basics of bee behavior and bee eusociality. There is an emphasis placed on the importance of bee behavior in urban environments and the importance of bees to local ecology. In Curriculum & Instruction 401, Methods of Reading: Early Literacy in Urban Classrooms, students walked the grounds of the UIC Greenhouse connecting observations, inquiries and experiences of native areas with children's books about pollinators, green spaces and ecology. Students also learned about the basics of beekeeping and bee behavior and their connection to urban ecology.

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

10

How many students attended those for-credit courses?

1770

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

course.

The UIC Nutrition Teaching Garden beehive successfully hosted four hands-on beekeeping demonstrations. These events served as both a community engagement opportunity and a platform to advance UIC's biodiverse university commitment. By collaborating with experts from the Chicago Honey Co-Op, best practices in beekeeping were implemented, enhancing knowledge-sharing among faculty and participants. Workshop participants received materials to support continued learning, including protective gear, hive tools and educational resources on beekeeping and honey use. Project investments included a hive, a bee package with a queen, educational signage on pollinators' roles and resources such as jars and UIC-branded labels for harvested honey. Water features and flowering plants were also introduced to support pollination. In September, 30 pounds of honey were harvested, with 50 pounds left in the hive to sustain the bees through winter. The honey was used in Human Nutrition Foods Lab courses, where students applied it in food product development projects as part of the HN 332 Food Service Management course. This initiative, originally developed through UIC's Teaching Sustainability Initiative, successfully integrated sustainability into academic programming. By establishing a living example of sustainable beekeeping, this service-learning project reinforced UIC's commitment to biodiversity, pollinator conservation and environmental education. Pollinators play a vital role in maintaining ecosystems, and the project provided students with hands-on experience in sustainability while contributing to the ecological health of the campus.

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

3

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

59

Dalton Day from the Chicago Honey Co-Op opens the hive so students can identify the queen, worker bees and drones.

Honey harvested from the hives are jarred, labeled and used in Human Nutrition cooking courses.

Applied Health Sciences Dean Carlos Crespo joins UIC students in the garden for beekeeping activities.

Policies & Practices

Committee Photo

Learn More

Integrated Pest Management Plan:
https://uofi.box.com/s/m1k45b5y1goizabx6q0ny95puo6rfbrc
Recommended Native Plant List:
https://uofi.box.com/s/m1k45b5y1goizabx6q0ny95puo6rfbrc
Recommended Native Plant Supplier List:
https://uofi.box.com/s/m1k45b5y1goizabx6q0ny95puo6rfbrc

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https://pspm.uic.edu/sustainability/biodiverse-university/campus-pollinator-habitat-plan/
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https://www.instagram.com/sustainableuic
https://www.facebook.com/SustainableUIC

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