

# Bee Campus USA - Virginia Western Community College

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.*

A native plant bed was established at the Virginia Western Community Arboretum. Here is a link to the article describing it: <https://www.viriniawestern.edu/news/2024/11/22/arboretums-new-garden-showcases-native-plants/>  
We grew approximately 900 native plants, trees, and shrubs on campus for the Blue Ridge Wildflower Society's community native plant sale. Twenty plants were donated to the Arboretum for the native plant bed. We have a second native plant garden planned for next year, which will be a cooperative effort between the Bee Campus Committee, the student Bee Club, the Blue Ridge Wildflower Society, and a local Girl Scout Gold Award Project.

*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?*

10

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

1200

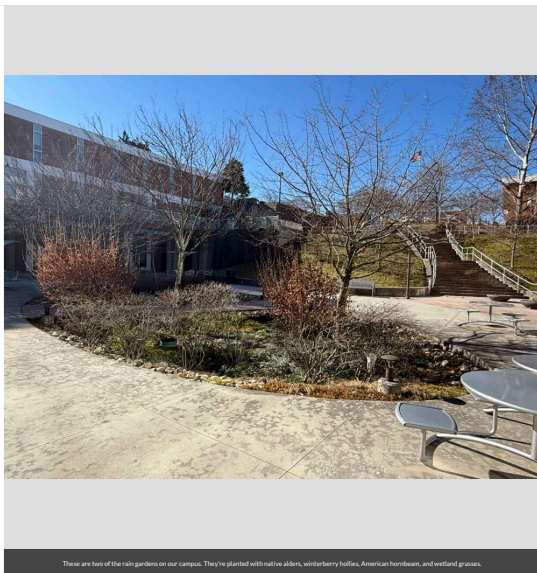
*Please check all that describe the habitats your affiliate helped to create or enhance last year with pollinator benefit in mind.*

- Flower garden
- Vegetable garden
- Natural area with tree snags and stumps, and bare areas for ground nesting species
- Pollinator-friendly lawn (with flowering clover, dandelions...)
- Herb garden
- Native pollinator-friendly tree planting
- Native pollinator-friendly shrub border/hedgerow planting
- Rain garden/bioswale

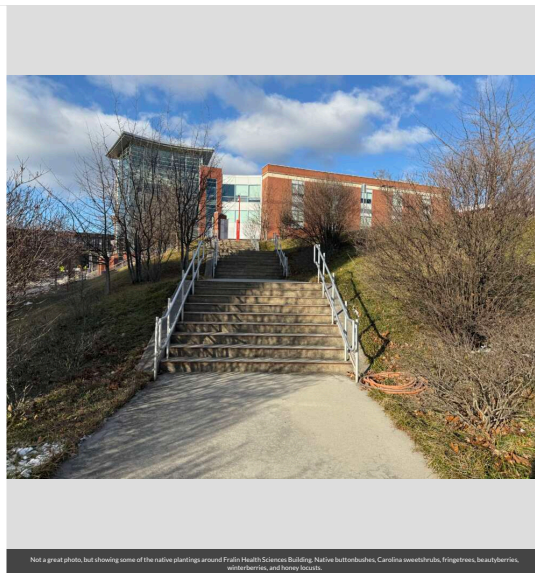
- Roadside/rights of way planting
- School garden



Although this photo is taken in winter, you can see the size of our newly installed Native Plant Bed at the arboretum. Photo Credit: Malory White, Member of Bee Campus Committee



These are two of the rain gardens on our campus. They're planted with native alders, winterberry hollies, American hornbeams, and wetland grasses.



Not a great photo, but showing some of the native plantings around Fralin Health Sciences Building. Native buttonbushes, Carolina sweetshrubs, fringe trees, beautyberries, winterberries, and honey locusts.

## Education & Outreach

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

**April 13 – STEM Day** – The Bee Campus Committee and student Bee Club led activities for local K-8 children. The children made seed bombs, tree ID activities, and various other pollinator-related crafts, while learning about the importance of providing native plants and pesticide-free landscapes for native pollinators. (1000+ attendees)

**April 15 and 18 – BEACON** – A Bee Campus committee member led activities on floral structure, pollination, fruit production, and where our food comes from for after school programs for at-risk students at two local middle schools. (25 students total)

**April 25 – Spring Fling** – The student Bee Club and Bee Campus Committee members had a table with educational materials from the Xerces Society and a seed bomb-making activity for students. (approximately 30-40 students participated in our activity)

**June 13 – New Student Bash** – This was an informational event about student clubs. The Bee Club had a table promoting the club and the mission of Bee Campus and recruited interested new VWCC students.

**September 15 – “Right Tree, Right Place”** – a presentation hosted by the Arboretum from the Roanoke Tree Stewards on tree selection; a tree ID tour of the arboretum was also part of the presentation.

**September 19 – Local Advisory Board** – Heather Butler, Bee Campus Co-Chair, presented the Bee Campus initiative to Virginia Western’s Local Advisory Board and highlighted the successful efforts of our campus facilities management and Bee Campus committee in maintaining a pollinator-friendly landscape. (Approximately 25 attendees)

**October 2 – VWCC**

and the Mill Mountain Garden Club hosted Dr. Aruni Bhatnagar, who gave a talk entitled “The Natural Environment and Human Health”. Dr. Bhatnagar described his Green Heart Louisville health research initiative, and the measured health benefits of local residents after his group planted over 8,000 trees and shrubs in urban blighted neighborhoods of Louisville, Kentucky. October 18-20 – GoFest in Roanoke’s Elmwood Park where students and faculty volunteered to educate the public about pollinators, native flowers, native trees, and our campus arboretum. October 29 – Bake Sale – The student Bee Club raised over \$500 in a fundraiser bake sale in which the students also promoted the importance of creating and maintaining pollinator-friendly habitats. November 21 – Earth Summit – VWCC hosted the Earth Summit, which is an annual event organized by the Clean Valley Council of Roanoke. Approximately 150 high school students attended workshops on various aspects of healthy ecosystems, wildlife habitat, and clean water systems. A Bee Campus Committee member led a workshop entitled “Planting for Pollinators”, and 75 students attended that workshop. Horticulture Department plant sales

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

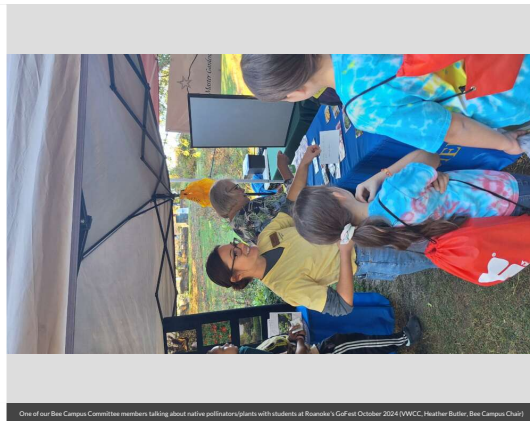
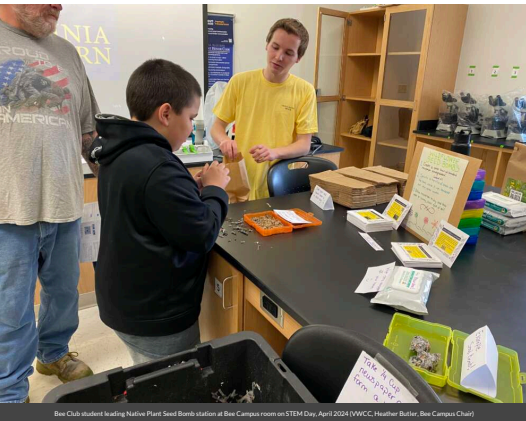
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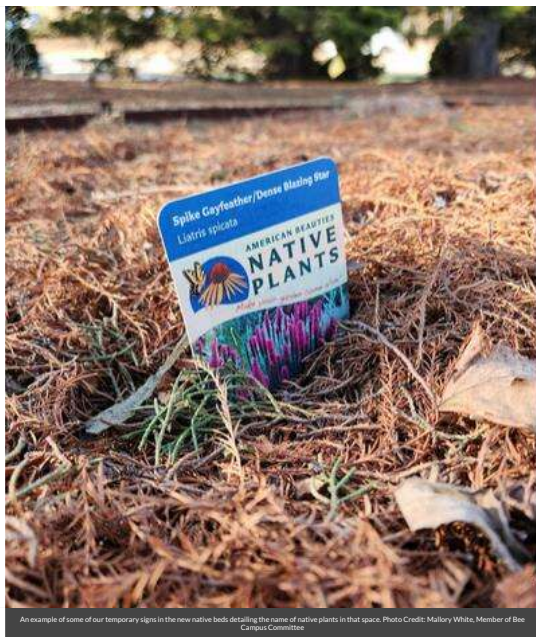
*How many people attended those events (in total)?*

1600

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

4





Our Bee Campus USA on the main road entering campus. Photo Credit: Malory White, Member of Bee Campus Committee

An example of some of our temporary signs in the new native beds detailing the name of native plants in that space. Photo Credit: Malory White, Member of Bee Campus Committee

We have multiple 'Leave the Leaves' signs in our public arboretum explaining why we leave the leaves in our garden beds, and encourage others to do so as well. Photo Credit: Malory White, Member of Bee Campus Committee

## 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.*

Pollinator-related information is incorporated into several of Virginia Western Community College's for-credit courses, which span a wide array of disciplines from horticulture (HRT) to computer science (CSC) to biology and ecology (BIO) to agriculture (AGR). For instance, the Plant Pest Management course (HRT 207) includes pest management strategies that emphasize protection of Hymenoptera pollinators and researches plant species that provide nutrition sources for pollinators. The Introduction to Problem Solving and Programming course (CSC 221) has students analyze a set of data related to bee populations and honey production by state. Students taking Ecology courses (BIO 270 and BIO 271) complete class projects that further students' knowledge and understanding of pollinator-friendly plants and their roles in their respective ecosystems. In our Agriculture courses (AGR 141 and AGR 142), field trips provide on-site, in-person experiences like touring Spikenard Farm & Honeybee Sanctuary and visiting farm pastures that have been converted to native pollinator habitats and conservation easements. Other courses, such as General Biology II (BIO 102), Plant Life of Virginia (BIO 215) and Dendrology (FOR 115), also utilize field trips to provide experiential learning on pollinators and pollinator-related information. In these for-credit courses in the last year, we had 197 students enrolled and directly impacted. The Virginia Western Community College's Horticulture Club has provided several continuing education opportunities involving pollinator-related information. One such event hosted speaker Sharon Burnham, founder of the local consulting firm GardenVitals. At one of the clubs' monthly garden talks, she spoke about promoting native plants and cultivating habitat for pollinators. Another garden talk had a speaker talk about native plants during a different month of the year, and Horticulture club member Tonya Judd did a

salve class with native plants during a third meeting. Each of these meetings had about 15 participants, making about 45 individuals exposed to pollinator-related information as a result of continuing education opportunities.

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

9

*How many students attended those for-credit courses?*

197

*How many of your continuing education courses included pollinator-related information in 2024?*

3

*How many participants attended those continuing education courses?*

45

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

1. Our horticulture club participated in plants sales on campus 2. The Bee Club helped maintain honey bee hives on campus 3. The students in the Bee Club helped with pollinator education to our own student population during Spring Fling on our campus 4. Bee Club students volunteered at STEM Day in which at least 1,000 K-12 students from our local population came to learn about all aspects of STEM on campus, including honeybees, pollinators, trees, and guests took home wildflower seeds. 5. Students participated in an off-campus event called GoFest, where they educated the general public about plants, pollinators, and our local arboretum 6. The Bee Club and Bee Campus Committee shared information at both the New Student Bash and Warm Welcome events in the summer and fall, respectively.

*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?*

20



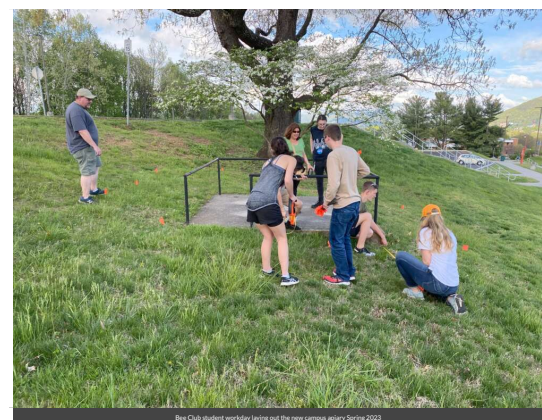
Group picnic from a field trip to Fenwick Mines (part of BIO 215: Plant Life of Virginia course) Photo Credit: Heather Butler, Bee Campus Committee



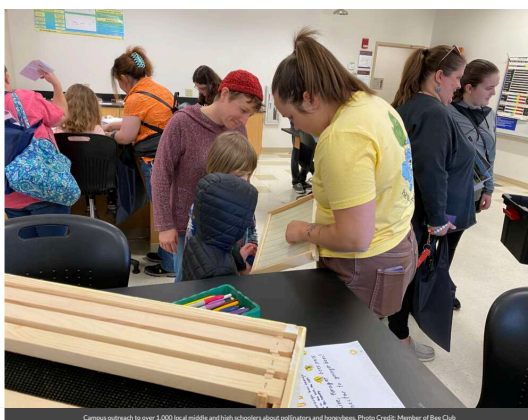
Specimens were collected on WCC campus for the purpose of student identification (part of HRT 203: Plant Pest Management course). Additionally, the instructor Micah Thomas has an AI program that is trained to sort bees and wasps, and these specimens were used to test it out. Photo Credit: Micah Thomas, WCC Instructor



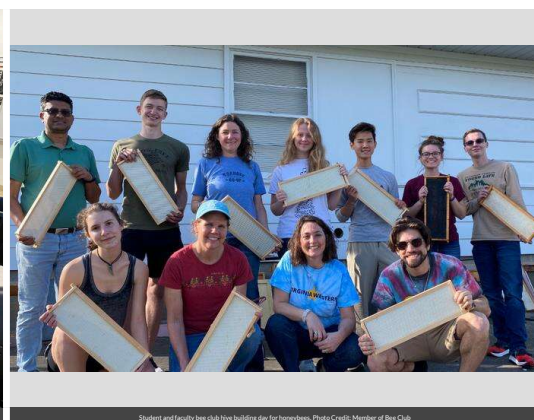
Field trip learning about regenerative farming and rotational grazing of cattle while also providing habitat for wildlife, including areas where government is planted on the perimeter of the farm, and the grass available from local conservation groups (part of AGR 345: Animal Science course). Credit: Makay White, member of Bee Campus Committee



Bee Club student workshop laying out the new campus apiary Spring 2023



Campus outreach to over 1,000 local middle and high schoolers about pollinators and honeybees. Photo Credit: Member of Bee Club



Student and faculty bee club hive building day for honeybees. Photo Credit: Member of Bee Club

## Policies & Practices

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

The college Facilities Management department embraces a pollinator-friendly pest management philosophy. They apply this by using the lowest impact methods first and only using pesticides as a last resort. Companion planting and a shift towards native and native cultivar plantings are other steps this group takes to create systems that foster non-aggressive management.

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

No new policy initiatives are planned, but we do have existing nutrient management plans that prevent fertilizers and any other chemicals from contaminating nearby waterways. We also have Erosion and Sediment Control Plans during active construction projects. These are administered by a third party contractor.

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

Several members of Virginia Western and specifically of the Bee committee have engaged in training that includes ecologically based pest management within the content covered. Clark BeCraft regularly attends the AmericanHort

Cultivate conference, Tonya Judd, Mark Cohen, and Heather Butler attended Xerces Society IPM webinar Each March our campus hosts, and some of our Bee Committee members attend, the Roanoke Tree Care Workshop, sponsored by Trees Virginia and held in partnership with VA Department of Forestry and Roanoke Valley Urban Forest Council.

*Any lessons learned you would like to share?*

Communication with groups across campus is essential to understanding the myriad ways our college is aligned with the Bee Campus USA program.

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## Committee Photo



This depicts some, but not all, students, faculty, and staff on our committee during a school event called Spring Fling. Photo Credit: Member of Bee Campus Committee

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Learn More

Integrated Pest Management Plan: [VWCC IPM Plan 2025.docx](#)

<https://www.viriniawestern.edu/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/VWCC-IPM-Plan-2025.pdf>

Recommended Native Plant List: [Plant List VWCC Campus 2025.xlsx](#)

Recommended Native Plant Supplier List: [VNPS-Native-Plant-Nursery-List.xlsx](#)  
<https://vnps.org/native-plant-nursery-list/>

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