

Bee Campus USA - Washington 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.

The Sustainability Council worked with the Natural Lands Project staff at the Center for Environment & Society to create a meadow outside of Cromwell Hall, one of our academic buildings. Our committee member and local native bee expert Pamela Cowart-Rickman led documentation research on our campus green in conjunction with Cornell University staff about a rare population of native bees on our campus (<https://www.washcoll.edu/live/news/native-bees-on-campus.php>). A small but dedicated crew of Master Gardeners worked on our apiary garden site as a public demonstration site for pollinator planting education, and our Permaculture Intern began the establishment of a butterfly oasis pollinator area at the epicenter of our campus garden.

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?

25

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

3

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

1500

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
- Meadow
- Herb garden

- Native milkweed planting for monarchs and bees (where appropriate)
- Invasive/exotic plant species removal for habitat improvement



Master Gardeners teamed up with our Campus Garden Permaculture Intern to maintain the apiary garden, which is a demonstration pollinator site. (Darius Kesey)

Education & Outreach

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

We hosted our annual beekeeping course with the purpose of creating student "Bee Ambassadors" to advocate for the support of pollinator populations on campus, and hosted an apiary event where we invited students to learn about the

beekeeping equipment while discussing pollinator habitat more broadly. Our Campus Garden Herbalist Intern hosted a few programs throughout the semester using beeswax harvested from campus garden hives and a variety of flowers in educational programming promoting the connection between human and ecological health.

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

2

How many people attended those events (in total)?

20

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

1

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

1



Herbalist Intern Rachel Beall led a workshop for students using flower blossoms and beeswax harvested from the apiary to make healing salves. (Shane Brill)

Rufous-backed Cellophane Bee
Colletes thoracicus



Bees in the Grass

There are over 400 species of native bees found in Maryland. Native bees help to pollinate local plants such as cherries, blueberries, and wildflowers. These pollinators populations have been declining in numbers due to increased pesticide use and loss of native plants which provide food and shelter for them.

What are these bees?

Surprisingly these bees are not just one species but rather multiple who show up at different times of the year. The bees seen around this sign are commonly known as ground bees. They are considered solitary bees since each female will dig her own burrow and fill it with food for her larva. Ground bees prefer sunny south facing hills with exposed sandy soil and good drainage.



Did you know?

Only female bees have a stinger. The stinger is a modified ovipositor which is an egg-laying device many insects use.



Mining Bee
Adrena sp.

Will they sting me?

Bees are typically not aggressive when left alone and are unlikely to sting. The bees flying around are busy searching for food and a mate.



A female mining bee (*Adrena sp.*) digging her nest.

Every spring the females emerge from the ground and begin to build their single nest tunnels. There they lay a single egg on the bottom with a ball made of pollen and nectar from nearby plants as food.



In 2018, Washington College became an affiliate of Bee Campus USA. This program helps to preserve pollinator habitat specifically for wild native bees by providing native plants, nesting sites, and avoiding the use of pesticides. Washington College has created pollinator hotels for solitary bees to nest in as well as planting native grasses near the waterfront at Semen-Griswold Hall.

Check out the WC Bee Campus USA page to learn more!

Parasitic Species

Parasites are organisms that obtains nutrients or food from another organism (host) which in the process harms the host.



Greater Bee Fly
Bombylius major

The Greater Bee Fly is a species of fly that lays their eggs in the nests of the mining bees. Their young feed on the pollen ball and larva of those bees.



Cuckoo Bee
Nomada sp.

Although they look like a wasp, this parasitic species is actually a type of bee that isn't as hairy. Adult cuckoo bees still consume pollen but don't feed it to their offspring. Instead, they lay their eggs inside the burrows of the mining bees.

Laurel Krause designed a sign about our rare population of campus green bees as part of her senior capstone project. (Laurel Krause)

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.

A beekeeping course was offered to students and staff, using honeybees as the gateway to a broader discussion of pollinator advocacy.

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

1

How many participants attended those continuing education courses?

6

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

The meadow planting at Cromwell Hall was a service learning project coordinated by the Student Sustainability Council.

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?

25



Students in the Beekeeping 101 course learn how to advocate for pollinators in general through their curriculum. (Shane Brill)



Students examine important plants for pollinators in a lead-up event to the meadow planting at Cromwell Hall. (Shane Brill)

Policies & Practices

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

- Implemented or maintained a written 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)

Committee Photo

Learn More

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

Recommended Native Plant List:

Recommended Native Plant Supplier List:

<https://www.washcoll.edu/sustainability/bee-campus-usa/>