

Bee City USA - Detroit

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.

With the collaboration of community stakeholders, philanthropic organizations, and passionate local advocates, Detroit Hives, in partnership with its Detroit Bee City Committee, has successfully transformed five vacant lots into flourishing botanical gardens. These gardens now serve as essential centers for scientific research, conservation efforts, public education, and community engagement. Once neglected and blighted, these spaces have been carefully reimagined into thriving, year-round sanctuaries filled with diverse perennial plants, offering a renewed sense of purpose and vitality. The transformation of these once-abandoned urban lots into lush green spaces has significantly contributed to the city's biodiversity. These gardens provide essential habitats for pollinators, including bees, butterflies, and other vital insects, whose presence strengthens local ecosystems. By establishing environments that support pollinator populations, Detroit Hives plays a crucial role in promoting ecological balance, ensuring that natural processes like plant reproduction and food production continue uninterrupted. Beyond their environmental impact, these botanical gardens serve as dynamic educational resources. They offer hands-on learning opportunities for students, researchers, and local residents, fostering a deeper understanding of pollination, sustainable gardening, and conservation practices. Workshops, guided tours, and interactive programs allow visitors to engage directly with nature, enhancing environmental awareness and inspiring future generations to become stewards of the land. Detroit Hives' initiative is more than just an ecological effort—it is a movement that bridges the gap between conservation and community development. These gardens create safe, beautiful spaces where residents can gather, connect with nature, and experience the benefits of green infrastructure. In underserved neighborhoods where access to green spaces is limited, these gardens provide a sanctuary for relaxation, recreation, and reflection, improving both physical and mental well-being. The organization's commitment to integrating nature into urban landscapes demonstrates the power of community-driven change. By repurposing vacant lots and investing in sustainable development, Detroit Hives not only revitalizes the environment but also strengthens neighborhood pride and social cohesion. These projects highlight the importance of local action in addressing global environmental challenges while simultaneously enhancing urban living conditions. Through its ongoing efforts, Detroit Hives continues to cultivate a future where both people and pollinators thrive. By championing conservation, education, and community engagement, the organization is paving the way for a more sustainable and interconnected world—one garden at a time.

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?

200

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

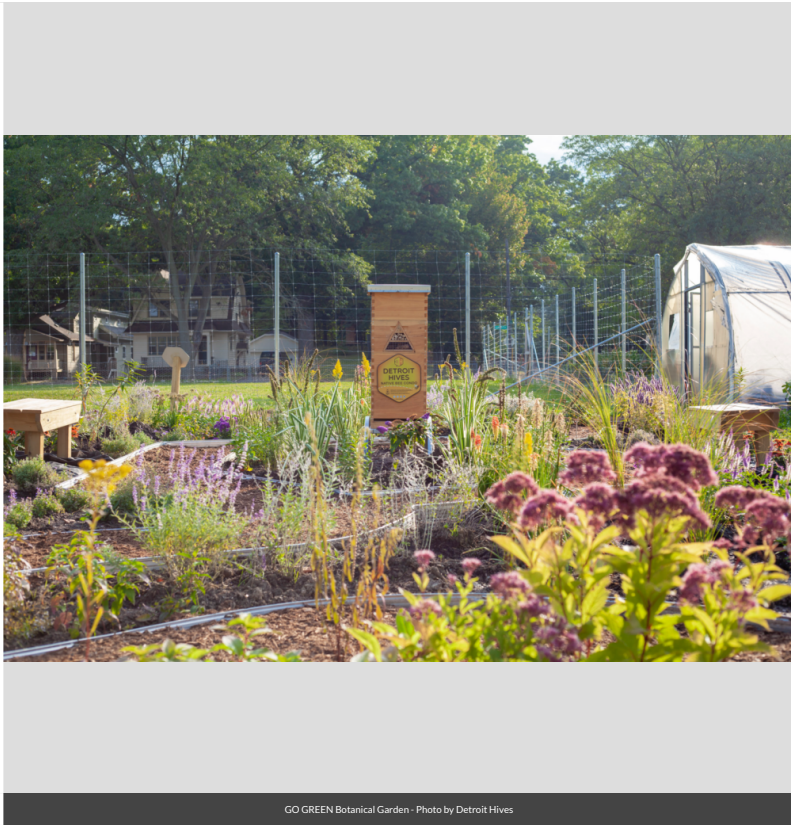
5

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

15591

Please check all that describe the habitats your affiliate helped to create or enhance in 2024 with pollinator benefit in mind.

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



GO GREEN Botanical Garden - Photo by Detroit Hives



Dr. Charles Henry Turner Botanical Garden - Photo by Detroit Hives

Education & Outreach

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

In honor of Black History Month, we teamed up with the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture to support their Kids in Learning program. Through this collaboration, we've helped educate hundreds of young minds across the nation about the vital role of pollinator conservation. We also highlighted the groundbreaking yet often overlooked contributions of Dr. Charles Henry Turner, the first American scientist to discover that bees can see shapes and colors—an achievement that was historically erased from history. As part of the 2024 NFL Draft in Detroit, Detroit Hives and its Detroit Bee City Committee participated in DCleated, collaborating with local artist Cameron Jenkins to raise awareness about native bees and their ecological importance. This initiative helped integrate environmental education into a major national event, expanding outreach to new audiences. Our partnership with the Detroit Grand Prix further reinforced our commitment to STEAM education by emphasizing the critical role of pollinators in biodiversity and conservation. Through interactive programming, we engaged attendees in discussions on the intersection of environmental sustainability and scientific innovation. In collaboration with the Ford Resource and Engagement Center, we contributed to their Family Resource Day, providing hands-on educational experiences for youth on pollinator conservation and honeybee biology. Additionally, at the Cranbrook Institute of Science's "Spring



Back into Science" event, we engaged families in learning about the vital role pollinators play in maintaining ecological balance. Together with the Detroit Bee City Committee, Detroit Hives hosted an educational workshop at the Michigan State University Detroit Partnership for Food, Learning, and Innovation (DPFLI) for members of Jack and Jill of America, Detroit Chapter, fostering youth engagement in environmental stewardship. We also joined forces with the Detroit Public Library to participate in its Summer Reading Program, offering literacy-based pollinator education at four branch locations. Recognizing Detroit's designation as both a Bee City and a Bird City, we collaborated with the Detroit Bird Alliance to lead a community tour, highlighting how green spaces contribute to both human well-being and urban pollinator habitats. Furthering our community engagement, we marked World Bee Day and National Pollinator Week by teaming up with local residents and Ally Financial's Green Team for civic engagement initiatives supporting pollinator conservation. Additionally, we partnered with the Belle Isle Art Fair's "Secret Garden" to host an interactive educational session on pollinators. Most recently, in February 2025, we collaborated with Friends of the Detroit River for Shiver on the River, a winter festival aimed at educating youth and families about the importance of pollinators, even in colder months. Through these strategic partnerships, Detroit Hives and its Detroit Bee City Committee continues to inspire and educate communities on the critical role of pollinators in sustaining our ecosystems, reinforcing our mission to create healthier urban environments through conservation, education, and civic engagement.

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

15

How many people attended those events (in total)?

180

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

5





Bee City USA Detroit Sign in front of the City of Detroit Coleman A Young Municipal Center- photo by Detroit Hives

Policies & Practices

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

We have launched a collaborative initiative involving urban farmers, community members, and local businesses to cultivate a rich variety of native wildflowers, promoting both ecological diversity and community engagement. This project plays a vital role in strengthening Detroit's existing green spaces, transforming them into thriving urban ecosystems that support local wildlife. By integrating native plant species, we seek to restore ecological balance, creating environments where beneficial predators naturally control invasive pest populations. Detroit's green spaces serve as essential urban habitats, offering refuge to pollinators, birds, and other wildlife. However, rapid urbanization and environmental challenges have placed these spaces under strain. Our initiative focuses on revitalizing these areas through the strategic introduction of native wildflowers, which are well adapted to the local climate and soil conditions. Unlike non-native species, native flora requires less maintenance, reduces the need for chemical interventions, and

provides a dependable food source for pollinators such as bees and butterflies. Beyond ecological benefits, this initiative fosters a sense of community ownership and participation. By engaging residents, urban farmers, and local businesses, we encourage active involvement in the city's environmental stewardship. Community-led planting efforts and educational workshops provide opportunities for residents to learn about the importance of native plants and their role in sustaining urban ecosystems. Additionally, local businesses contribute by providing resources, sponsorships, and land access, further strengthening the collaborative nature of this project. A key goal of our initiative is to enhance Detroit's environmental resilience. Native wildflowers not only support biodiversity but also contribute to improved air and soil quality. Their deep root systems help prevent soil erosion, absorb excess rainwater, and reduce the urban heat island effect by providing natural cooling. By transforming vacant lots and underutilized spaces into flourishing green areas, we create vibrant landscapes that benefit both people and wildlife. Moreover, the presence of biodiverse green spaces has social and psychological benefits. Studies have shown that access to nature in urban settings enhances mental well-being, reduces stress, and fosters a greater sense of community pride. By integrating native wildflowers into Detroit's landscape, we aim to create welcoming, sustainable spaces that improve the quality of life for residents while reinforcing the city's commitment to environmental sustainability. Through this initiative, we are not only preserving Detroit's natural heritage but also building a model for sustainable urban development. By working together, we can create a city where nature and community thrive in harmony.

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.

We are committed to launching a neighborhood-led program designed to educate residents and local landscapers on the critical role of pollinators in sustaining urban ecosystems. This initiative will empower communities with the knowledge and tools to attract pollinators, such as bees and butterflies, to enhance their floral and vegetable gardens while promoting environmentally responsible landscaping practices. Our program will focus on providing residents with practical strategies to create pollinator-friendly environments, including the selection of native plants, the importance of seasonal blooms, and the benefits of reducing pesticide use. By fostering greater awareness, we aim to support the health and growth of pollinator populations, ultimately contributing to the ecological and agricultural sustainability of Detroit's neighborhoods. Additionally, we recognize the vital role of landscapers in shaping urban green spaces. As part of this initiative, we will educate local landscaping professionals on the importance of pollinators and equip them with the knowledge to identify and properly manage honeybee swarms. Rather than resorting to harmful chemical treatments, landscapers will be introduced to alternative, bee-friendly solutions and directed to local organizations, such as Detroit Hives, that specialize in safe honeybee removal and relocation. By bridging the gap between community members and environmental stewardship, this initiative will cultivate a culture of pollinator conservation throughout Detroit. Through workshops, informational resources, and hands-on training, we seek to foster a citywide movement that values and protects pollinators, ensuring a thriving and resilient green infrastructure for generations to come.

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

Detroit Hives, in partnership with its Detroit Bee City Committee, is poised to collaborate with local municipalities, like-minded organizations, and community members to enhance efforts in safeguarding pollinators from the dangers of pesticides. This initiative aims to foster a collective commitment to preserving the health and well-being of vital pollinators in the region. At the state level, Michigan's House Bill 4858 has been proposed to prohibit the use of neonicotinoid pesticides on public lands, marking a significant step forward in environmental protection. This legislative action demonstrates an increasing recognition of the urgent need to protect pollinators from harmful chemicals that threaten their survival. The bill aligns with broader efforts to address environmental challenges while supporting biodiversity and ecological sustainability. Through these combined efforts, Detroit Hives and its partners are working to create a more pollinator-friendly environment, ensuring that future generations benefit from the crucial role these insects play in ecosystems and food production.

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

Detroit Bee City Committee members, Timothy Jackson and Nicole Lindsey, have furthered their professional development in integrated pest management through various certifications. They became certified Pollinator Stewards through the Pollinator Partnership, gaining valuable insights into creating natural solutions for managing invasive pests. Additionally, they earned their Master Rain Gardener certifications through the Friends of the Rouge, learning how to design rain gardens that promote biodiversity and protect Michigan's waterways. Lastly, they completed the Master Beekeeper program through E-Cornell, equipping themselves with the knowledge to develop integrated pest management plans that support pollinators.

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

- 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)
- Sourced plants for city or campus grounds using “Buying Bee-Safe Plants” methods recommended by Xerces Society. (See <https://xerces.org/publications/fact-sheets/buying-bee-safe-plants>)
- Sourced plants for city or campus grounds that were not treated with neonicotinoids
- Encouraged developers and private landscapers to source plants using “Buying Bee-Safe Plants” methods recommended by Xerces Society. (See <https://xerces.org/publications/fact-sheets/buying-bee-safe-plants>)
- Encouraged developers and private landscapers to source plants that were not treated with neonicotinoids



Common Eastern Bumble Bee visiting Chive Blossom. Photo by Detroit Hives

Any lessons learned you would like to share?

By collaborating with schools, businesses, and organizations, we harness the power of collective intelligence to achieve greater success.

Committee Photo



Detroit Bee City Committee - photo by Detroit Hives

Learn More

Integrated Pest Management Plan:

Recommended Native Plant List:

Recommended Native Plant Supplier List:

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