

Bee City USA - Hawthorn Woods

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.

In 2022, we adopted a Pollinator Pocket Program, which provides our residents with a practical demonstration of proper management techniques in creating a pollinator-friendly garden, and is easily adopted by resident homeowners surrounding each of these neighborhood road islands. No new pockets were added in 2024, but members of our Hawthorn Woods in Bloom Committee, Sustainability Committee, and Rotary Club all aided in maintaining these islands and enhancing 32 of the islands by reseeding them. In the end of 2023 1.5 acre of land was donated to the Village. This land contained an already established fruit orchard of about 40 trees, these are still present and help bring pollinators to that land. In 2024 a 2 acre pollinator garden was also added to enhance the surrounding area. This work was done with the help of our Hawthorn Woods in Bloom Committee. Indian Creek Nature Preserve was once a 9.5-acre thicket of overgrown vegetation. However, through the extensive clearing and planting efforts of our Village Parks Crew and a diverse group of dedicated volunteers, Indian Creek is now a sustainable woodland and wetland pollinator habitat. To further improve this natural habitat, some fallen trees were also left to provide shelter and other habitat opportunities for ground dwelling species. Indian Creek is open to the public and accessible to all mobilities, located within the Conservatory of Indian Creek subdivision. This park boasts an ADA accessible trail, in addition to ADA benches constructed with recycled materials. In 2024 a local Eagle Scout put in 2 recycled benches and community library that he built using recycled plastic materials. All of this is just Phase 1 of our plan to renew this space to its full potential as a sanctuary for pollinators and a way to educate our community on their importance. For the Village it has been our motto to bring the woods back in Hawthorn Woods. For that reason, in 2024 alone we have planted over 150 trees throughout our parks. This was made possible with 2 grants, Chicago Region Trees Initiative and Lake County Tree Planting Program. As result of these efforts, we won the America in Bloom – Outstanding Achievement Award in Urban Forestry. Along with this award, the Village conducted an extensive two-day tour of our community for two AIB national advisors. Hawthorn Woods was judged on cultural heritage, community vitality, environmental leadership, beautification efforts, citizen engagement, and urban forestry. Over 150 evaluation metrics were scored, and in the under 14,000 population category, we accumulated the most overall points of all participating cities across the nation and won the Community Champion National Award. This marks the fourth time the Village has received this prestigious recognition. Throughout our different parks, in 2024 more buckthorn as well as phragmites were cleared. Where cleared more wildflower seeds were spread to boost the pollinators in the area and restore that habitat. As a Village, we have worked hard to educate and implement the mass removal of the invasive buckthorn plant throughout the entire community. In total, we have removed buckthorn from 1.5 acres of land in the following areas: Country Meadow Sanctuary; Indian Creek Preserve; Bridlewoods Park; Woodland Park; and Brierwoods Preserve.

This work could not have been done without the help of many individuals from the Hawthorn Woods in Bloom Committee, America in Bloom Committee, Rotary Club, and other community members. Also in Indian Creek Nature Preserve, the banks of the creek were cleared from debris, fallen trees, and brush then seeds were poured to restore the banks once again. One other effort we are a part of is we are partnering with and promoting a program offered through the Ancient Oaks Foundation, in which private homeowners can receive up to \$150 for the removal of buckthorn on their private property.

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

36

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

107

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

36

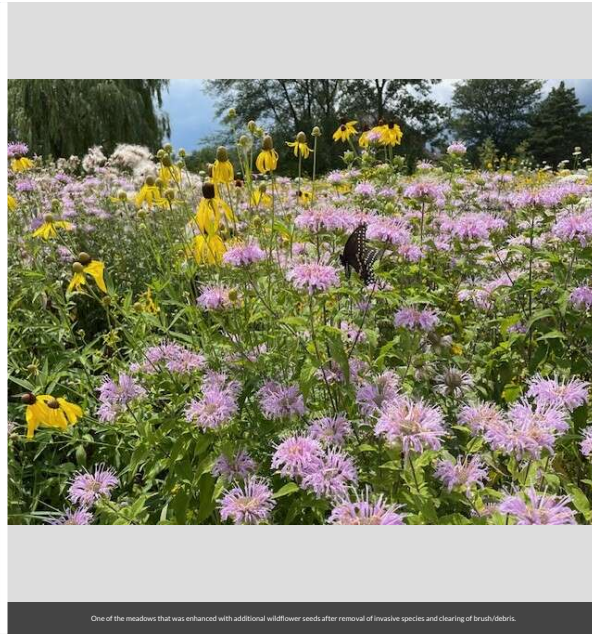
How many total square feet of habitat were created or enhanced?

186000

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

- Flower garden
- Vegetable garden
- Orchard
- Natural area with tree snags and stumps, and bare areas for ground nesting species
- Meadow
- 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
- Native pollinator-friendly tree planting
- Native pollinator-friendly shrub border/hedgerow planting
- Roadside/rights of way planting

- School garden



One of the meadows that was enhanced with additional wildflower seeds after removal of invasive species and clearing of brush/debris.

This is what we lovingly call stumpy, one of our tree stumps that is just outside of village hall. One of our members of the Hawthorn Woods in Bloom Committee manages the stump and decorates it for the passing holidays.

Education & Outreach

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

Since Hawthorn Woods' 2020 designation with Bee City USA, the Village has gone above and beyond in its commitment to expanding pollinator habitat expansion, education, and beneficial practices. In 2024, we were able to conduct Pollinator Week events. Below are examples of the different activities/actions that our Village provided during Pollinator Week: • Various Facebook posts with educational materials, Pollinator Tool Kits, and Pollinator Friendly cooking recipes • A live zoom seminar hosted by the Lake County Bee Keeper's Association • Working with our local Elia Township Library to spotlight books about pollinators • Multiple activities/challenges/crafts with which the public could complete We aim to host another engaging and educational Pollinator Week in 2025. In addition to Pollinator Week, the following are examples of how we educated our community and kept them informed of all things about pollinators. Every year, the Hawthorn Woods Sustainability Committee hosts a public Arbor Day Tree Giveaway event for residents. Tree saplings are purchased from the Mason State Nursery and are distributed to residents with instructions on where and how to plant for optimal results. The selected species are all native to Hawthorn Woods and instructions for maintenance are provided with each sapling. In 2024, residents drove through and received a total of 650 tree saplings for their homes. Each year, unclaimed saplings are retained and planted in one of the Village's parks or preserves by staff or volunteers. This year all saplings were given to residents with no unclaimed trees. In addition to

the tree saplings, just as many wildflower and milkweed seed packets were given to those who drove through this past year. These seeds are harvested from our very own pollinator flowers throughout the community by our committee members and the additional seed packets are from the Save the Monarch Group of Buffalo Grove. Our Hawthorn Woods in Bloom Committee members hosted an information table at many of our community events throughout the year. They distributed informational brochures, as well as seed packets on multiple occasions. These events boasted anywhere from 500 to 800 people in attendance. Many of our village employees conducted educational presentations throughout our community. Our Director of Parks & Recreation led a multitude of presentations both in our community and outside of it. Some topics of these presentations included the importance of Monarchs, planting pollinator gardens, and the variety of pollinators in our area. He spoke for various groups such as our local YMCA, church, Special Recreation Association, and Rotary Club. One specific presentation that our Director was able to do was at the Chicago Brookfield Zoo. He spoke on topics like the importance of Monarch conservation, volunteer efforts, adding monarch islands throughout your community as well as different funding sources to complete these projects. In addition to these presentations, our Chief Operating Officer, Director of Parks & Recreation, and Superintendent of Parks were able to attend the Bee City Keynote Speaker at the America in Bloom annual conference in 2024.

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

12

How many people attended those events (in total)?

1600



Policies & Practices

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

Continuing the Village's environmental efforts, our raised gardens were once again planted and harvested by Village employees. The raised gardens are located at Village Hall and at our Public Works Building, where both flowers and garden vegetables are grown. The purchased plants are organically grown and placed together in plant communities that do not compete with one another. The Village continues to recycle large pieces of wood from trees that have been cut down into container gardens. These large pieces of wood are hollowed out, with drainage holes carved out and then planted up. They can be seen in front of Village Hall and in front of various local businesses throughout our community. They will soon be available for the front porches of our residents. These containers, each one unique, are sculpted by our Public Works Department and can be utilized year after year. This is a 100% eco-friendly initiative. Eagle Scout create an ADA bench made from recycled material and place it on our walking trail within Indian Creek Preserve. Along with these benches, we have committed to utilize the dead trees removed from the parks as mulch for our public walking/hiking trails that are built to ADA specifications. Once that mulch was used up we were able to supplement mulch from other nearby villages/PD using their recycled mulch. In June 2022, our Sustainability Committee presented the Urban Forest Management Plan to our Village Board and was approved to begin implementation over the past few summers. Below are a few examples of what we have accomplished thus far: 1. Our committee reviews the status of all trees in public lands and report the information back to our Village Board. 2. We continually send our staff to training programs/opportunities to learn how to better maintain the forests within our parks. 3. We annually compete for the Tree City/Arbor Day Foundation Growth Award. 4. Planted close to 150 trees throughout the village in 2024, most of which are pollinator friendly trees. A continuous effort within our community is the removal of thistle and teasel throughout our parks. This is a constant group effort to eliminate these invasive species in order to restore our natural pollinator sanctuaries. This, along with our use of organic pesticides and all phosphate-free fertilizer, will enable us to further create an environment for pollinators to thrive. Our staff also works hard to educate our village landscapers/vendors on what to cut and what to keep, how to treat certain plants, and what to look for in regards to our various pollinators.

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.

Yes, we work with our Homeowners Associations to include information in their newsletters for their residents. Information including, but not limited to, reducing pesticide use/alternative more natural pesticides, and practices that protect and help pollinators.

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

Yes, looking to 2025, we are working with our Sustainability Committee to create an initiative for reducing/eliminating harmful pesticide use.

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

Our Director of Parks and Recreation has attended multiple webinars provided by the Illinois Association for Park Districts (IAPD), in-person sessions at the Illinois Parks and Recreation Association Annual Conference. Our Superintendent of Parks also attended training through Illinois department of agriculture to receive his license in general pesticide knowledge and application.

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

- Implemented or maintained a written IPM plan
- Only use pesticides as a last resort within the 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)
- Implemented non-chemical pest prevention and management methods on city or campus grounds
- Eliminated pesticide uses that are solely to maintain aesthetics on city or campus grounds
- Reduced the total area of city or campus-managed lands to which pesticides are applied
- Restricted pesticides used to organic pesticides on city or campus grounds
- Distributed educational materials to residents or students to encourage the reduction or elimination of pesticide use
- 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



This shows our effort to take down fallen/dead trees and use them for mulch. This recycled mulch was used throughout all our park.

Any lessons learned you would like to share?

Always aim to grow and seek new knowledge to better your community.

Committee Photo

Learn More

Integrated Pest Management Plan: [Village of Hawthorn Woods EAB Management Plan.docx](#)

Recommended Native Plant List: [NativePlantPollinatorChart.pdf](#)

Recommended Native Plant Supplier List: [Hawthorn Woods Native Plant Supplier List.pdf](#)

