

Bee City USA - Newport News

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.

Same team of people and partners worked in April 2024 to select flowering trees to be planted at Huntington Park, to coincide with Arbor Day celebration. The planting is a Kousa Dogwood that will produce flowers in late spring to early summer for our pollinators.

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

10

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

100

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

2

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

100000

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
- 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

- Roadside/rights of way planting



Green Foundation Boardmembers and Bee City Affiliate members and community leaders planting pollinator friendly trees during Arbor Day celebration (photo courtesy Michael Poplawski)

Education & Outreach

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

By City Council Resolution, our affiliate is comprised of high-level City representation, the Mariner's Museum, the Peninsula Council of Gardens Clubs, the Bee Byway, the Colonial Beekeepers Association, Tidewater Beekeepers Association, Newport News Green Foundation, Christopher Newport University, Hampton Roads Garden Club and Huntington Garden Club. Additionally, the city's corporate community is heavily vested in maintaining health pollinator habitats, spending millions of dollars consistently on healthy and beautiful landscapes. This happens all across the City of Newport News. We would be remiss to not include all of the partners that we can think of in this effort as we do not want to offend anyone. We will also mention that some members have dual memberships and/or partnerships. It is very common to have volunteers participate in each other's events quite often. • The Huntington Garden Club's November 12, 2024 meeting had a presentation, "Pollinator Trees for Your Garden", on trees that attract pollinators, which was so great because people don't usually think of trees when considering what to plant to attract bees as well as other pollinators. And yes mostly native. • The Hampton Roads Garden Club continues to educate its membership about the necessity of having a healthy Bee and Insect population. They had 2 wonderful programs presented to the group this past year. Heather Holm, award-winning author and pollinator conservationist, led a discussion on "Attracting Bees and Beneficial Insects with Native Plants" and revealed the remarkable ways in which flowers and insects evolved together to feed and pollinate. • Eva Clark from "The Garden of Good and Eva" in

Richmond, Virginia who is a garden consultant, and Master Gardener gave a wonderful program called “Easy Steps Toward a Healthier Yard”, which involves “leaving the leaves” which helps create space for pollinators to hibernate over winter. • Membership was encouraged to replace non-native plants and shrubbery with native ones to increase the visitation of Bees and other pollinators to local yards and thereby creating an abundance of habitat, as opposed to habitat deserts. While the following are Newport News Green Foundation activities and events, the organization and membership are interwind with each other to accomplish the same mission: • Project One: Dance, Environmental Justice, and Wellness at Sarfan Food Forest On November 18, Professor Ann Mazzocca Bellecci, an associate professor of Dance in the Department of Music, Theatre, and Dance at Christopher Newport University, led her honors seminar students in a unique experiential learning opportunity at the Sarfan Food Forest. This seminar, which is also a Community-Engaged Learning (CEL) class, focuses on the intersection of dance studies, environmental justice, and wellness. During their visit, CNU students collaborated with elementary school children from Discovery STEM Academy to bring their studies to life. Through dance, art, and a scavenger hunt, the young learners simulated pollination, making meaningful connections between movement and nature. • Project Two: Wax Myrtle Planting at Center Avenue Green Space On December 19, in partnership with Dominion Energy and volunteers from Christopher Newport University (CNU), our team undertook the first phase of transforming the green space at Center Avenue by planting 15 native wax myrtle shrubs. This initiative was made possible through an environmental stewardship grant from the Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation. • Project Three: Tree and Plant Installation at Eastwood Drive Green Space On November 16, volunteers gathered to plant 30-40 native trees and plants at our green space on Eastwood Drive. This initiative was supported by generous donations dedicated to maintaining and expanding green spaces within Newport News.

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

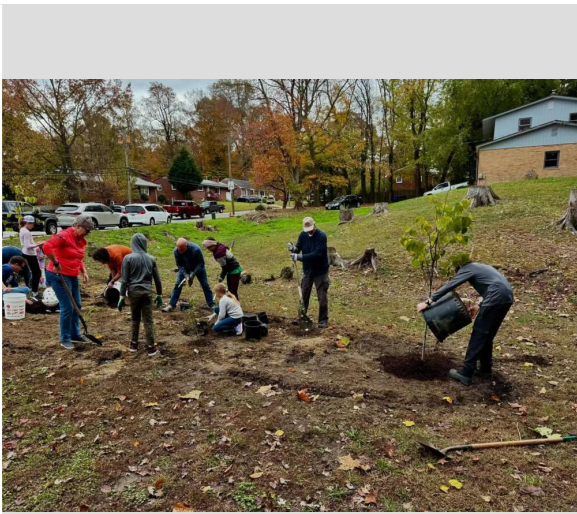
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How many people attended those events (in total)?

40

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

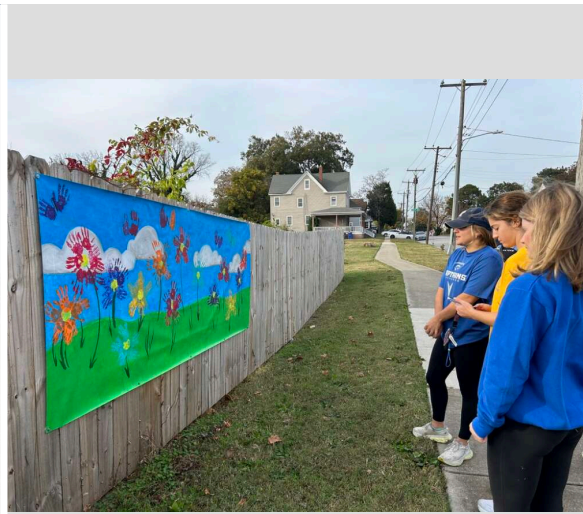
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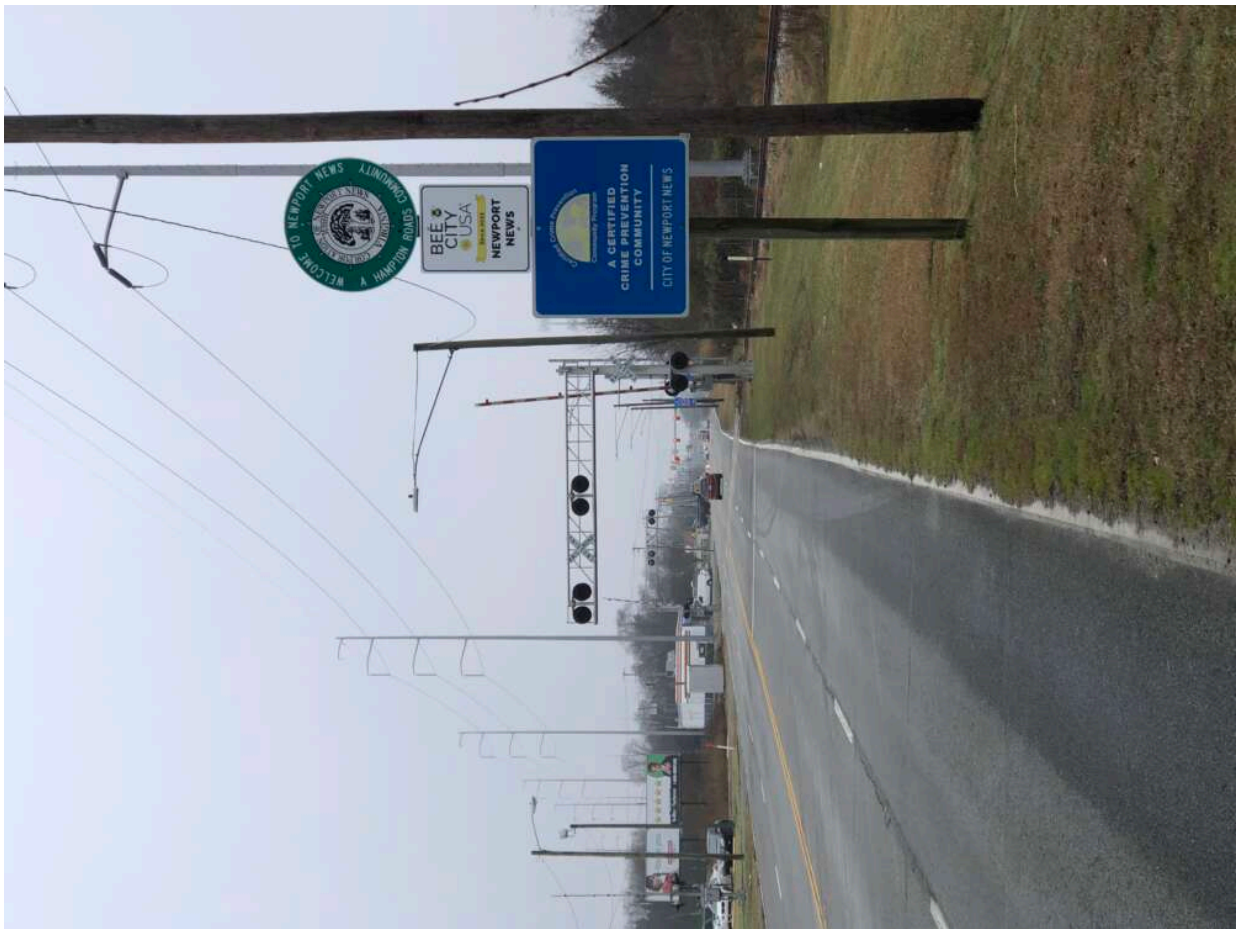
Restorative plantings to counter harmful and careless infill development land disturbance (photo Courtesy Tami Fairholt)



STEM Kids at Sarfan Food Forest Dance Learning About Pollinator Habitats (Photo courtesy of Tami Fairholt)



CNU Students look at STEM Kids Art Project at Sarfan Food Forest Dance (photo courtesy of Tami Fairholt)



Bee City Sign at 39th St Entry (from City of Hampton) photo credit David S. Freeman

Policies & Practices

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

• Neonicotinoids are no longer used as a preventative insecticide. They are only used in rare occasions as a curative in the off-flowering season. • Additional Native perennials/pollinator plantings such as Common Yarrow, Golden Rod, Swamp Milkweed, Whorled Coreopsis, Joe-Pye Weed and Asters have been planted in the City Hall campus, Riverview Farm Park and Main Street Library over the last couple of years. • Panicum virgatum- Switchgrass, has been planted throughout the City and maintained through the winter months serving as shelter for small mammals, birds and pollinators. • Wild Hydrangea, Inkberry, Virginia Sweetspire, Arrow-wood Viburnum and Wax Myrtle are examples of flowering shrubs regularly specified & planted throughout City landscapes. • Redbuds, Serviceberry, Hornbeam, Willow Oaks, Live Oaks, Black gums, Loblolly Pines, Bald Cypress, Fringe Tree are native trees widely specified and planted throughout the City landscapes. • Non-native perennials that attract pollinators, such as Cat Mint, Yucca, Butterfly Bush, Black-eyed Susan, Rosemary, Yarrow, Gaura, and Pink Muhly Grasses, are also regularly specified and planted throughout City projects. • Parks & Recreation continues to encourage pollinator-friendly plantings, as well as preservation of existing pollinator habitat, as part of its management of over 8,000 acres of parkland. • Parks & Recreation continues to work with a variety of conservation-oriented community groups (e.g., Newport News Green Foundation, Newport News Master Gardeners, Virginia Master Naturalists, neighborhood garden clubs), providing assistance and information pertaining to pollinator friendly plantings.

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.

Through word of mouth, and brochures that we include in gift bags/swag bags, we work to get the word out. Our efforts cover a wide cross-section of the City. We have even worked to promote with visitors to the City. We have recently ran out of our very popular swag and have to completely replenish our supply.

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

Beyond what was mentioned earlier, we will take it a step further. Our team goes the extra mile by working extra hard to save our bees when they setup habitats in City areas where their survival may be placed at risk. Every little life is precious to us. We have resources to carefully collect and relocate hives to areas where they can thrive and be free from danger. We have included a picture of our local efforts for example.

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

Yes. Our group continually looks for all best practices methods and shares findings amongst the team members.



Practice to safely relocate our little friends when they set up shop in not so safe City spaces (photos courtesy of Michael Poplawski)

Any lessons learned you would like to share?

Getting organized can be a big challenge. There always seem to be volunteers and those who are amenable to giving monetary contributions (or investing) to improve the pollinator habitats. Although Newport is fairly new to this designation, we appreciate recent efforts from adjacent affiliate to collaborate and look forward to what the future brings. Our pollinators are their pollinators, too, as the pollinators really have no boundaries here on the peninsula.

Committee Photo

City of Newport News Bee City Affiliate Officer Board



Dale Banning
Co Chair



Rebecca Fass
Co Chair



David S. Freeman
Acting Secretary & Chief
of Management Services

City of Newport News Bee City Affiliate Officer Board (photo Credit David S. Freeman)

Learn More

Integrated Pest Management Plan:

Recommended Native Plant List:

Recommended Native Plant Supplier List:

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