

Bee City USA - Reno

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.

Last year, we hosted three habitat enhancement projects in partnership with Keep Truckee Meadows Beautiful (KTMB). Our efforts were integrated into two citywide clean-ups, and we were also given a dedicated project day for our own habitat work. KTMB played a crucial role in recruiting volunteers from various organizations and providing all necessary tools for the projects. Each habitat enhancement day was organized with guidance from the Valley Wood Wildlife Gardens' curators, who led volunteer groups in completing essential conservation tasks. Volunteers worked to remove invasive weeds, plant pollinator- and bird-friendly species, and expand the food forest—providing benefits to birds, pollinators, and people. Additional efforts included applying beneficial mulch to trails and covering exposed drip lines to improve water efficiency and soil health. Across these three events, 90 volunteers contributed their time, working hard and showing eagerness to learn about successful planting techniques, the importance of drip irrigation, and the ecological reasons for avoiding pesticides in the park. In all, 353 new plants were planted, and 260 lbs. of green waste was removed. The events also provided opportunities to educate volunteers on the selection of pollinator-friendly plants and their role in supporting wildlife. Additionally, three new "guzzlers" (wildlife water sources) were installed at various locations within the gardens. See photo. For the upcoming year, we are scheduled to host three more habitat workdays—two in conjunction with citywide clean-ups and one dedicated to Valley Wood Park. In addition to our habitat projects, we entered into a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the City of Reno, granting Biggest Little Bee City (BLBC) broad autonomy in the development and maintenance of the Valley Wood Wildlife Garden, within established guidelines. Maintenance and curatorship are provided by BLBC committee members, including representatives from partner organizations such as KTMB, the Audubon Society, Reno Parks Department staff, and neighborhood community members. This diverse coalition ensures that ideas and solutions come from multiple stakeholders invested in the park's success. Proposals are discussed in monthly meetings to ensure they align with the park's vision and the MOU framework.

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

2

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

180

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

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

43560

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

- Flower 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
- Rain garden/bioswale



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 three public tours of the Valley Wood Wildlife Gardens in 2024. Each tour was led by the Reno city horticulturist or the Gardens' originator, Tom Stille, with additional insights provided by the eight individual garden curators. – Spring Pollinator Walk (May 18, 2024): This tour focused on early-season pollinators and native plant blooms. Participants learned about early-emerging native bees, butterflies, and other pollinators. Key spring-blooming plants such as firecracker penstemon and fruit trees were highlighted, with discussions on their role in supporting pollinators. The event was attended by 22 participants, including gardeners, educators, and conservation enthusiasts. – Summer Habitat Tour (July 13, 2024): This tour highlighted peak pollinator activity and native plant diversity. Featured plants included mid-summer pollinator favorites like milkweed, bee balm, and coneflowers. Discussions covered habitat restoration efforts, lawn conversions, plant diversity, and sustainable land management practices. The tour attracted 30 participants, including families and local conservation advocates. – Fall Foraging and Seed Collection Walk (Sept. 21, 2024): This tour focused on preparing habitats for overwintering pollinators. Participants learned about the importance of late-season forage plants such as asters and goldenrod in supporting migrating and overwintering pollinators. Attendees also took part in a hands-on native seed collection activity, learning how to harvest and store seeds for their own pollinator-friendly gardens. The event had 18 participants, including community members interested in pollinator-friendly landscaping. Additionally, we participated in the first annual Reno Pollinator Garden Tour, sponsored by the University of Nevada, Reno Extension. Valley Wood Wildlife Gardens was one of six featured public pollinator gardens. The event, held on the Sunday following Pollinator Week 2024, attracted approximately 300 residents.

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)?

1375

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

1





Bee City USA Street Sign at Reno City Plaza, across the street from City Hall. (Ray Hopper)

Policies & Practices

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

Our approach centers on integrating ecologically responsible pest management practices that reduce pesticide exposure to pollinators. For example, we emphasize non-chemical methods—such as cultural, mechanical, and biological controls—as the first line of defense, and only resort to pesticide applications when pest thresholds are

clearly exceeded. When chemical treatments are necessary, we select reduced-risk products and apply them in a targeted manner, using the lowest effective dose in the smallest effective area. We also adjust application timing—avoiding periods when pollinators are actively foraging or when plants are in bloom—to minimize unintended exposure.

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 partners with Bee Friendly Nevada, which posts lawn signs proclaiming your commitment to reduce pesticide use and promote pollinator habitat. To qualify for the lawn sign, residents must take the pledge: 1) I will promote healthy soil and will not use pesticides. 2) I will leave water out for pollinators. 3) I will plant organic native and pollinator plants. 4) I will "Leave the Leaves" to increase soil fertility and create pollinator habitats. 5) If I have a lawn, I will mow less frequently to allow flowers to bloom. We helped fund the printing and distribution of these yard signs (see photo). Last year, 400 of these lawn signs were distributed throughout the state of Nevada.

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

No new policy initiatives. The Reno Parks Dept. continues to improve city parks with pollinator-friendly plantings and using vetted herbicides as last resort; and insecticides not at all.

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

Two members (Ray Hopper and Barb Fenne) completed the Pollinator Steward Certification program hosted by the Pollinator Partnership.

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

- 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
- Eliminated use of neonicotinoid insecticides 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 that were not treated with

neonicotinoids





Bee Friendly Nevada Lawn Sign. (Ray Hopper)

Any lessons learned you would like to share?

Strategic partnerships with local nonprofits and city staff are critical to our success.

Committee Photo



Biggest Little Bee City Committee and friends (Ray Hopper)

Learn More

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

Recommended Native Plant List: [BLBC Valley Wood Plant List.pdf](#)

Recommended Native Plant Supplier List:

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<https://biggestlittlebeecity.org>

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AN INITIATIVE OF THE XERCES SOCIETY

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for Invertebrate Conservation