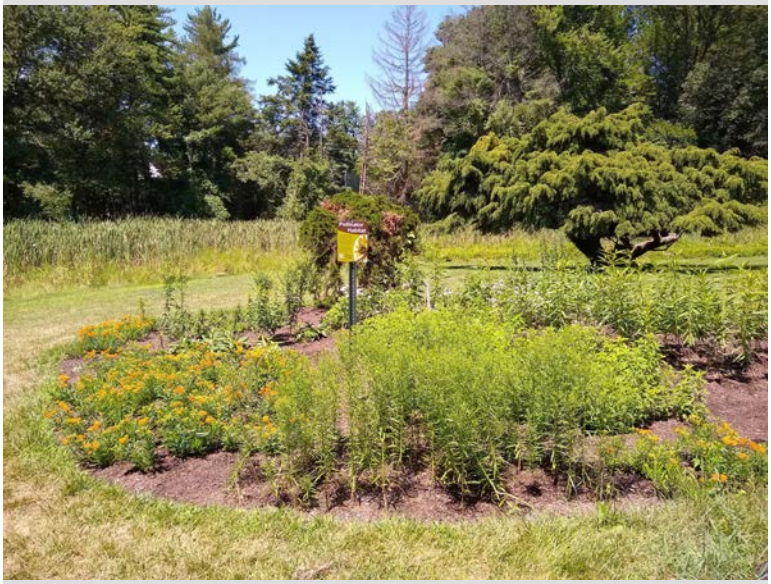
Bee Campus USA - Vassar College

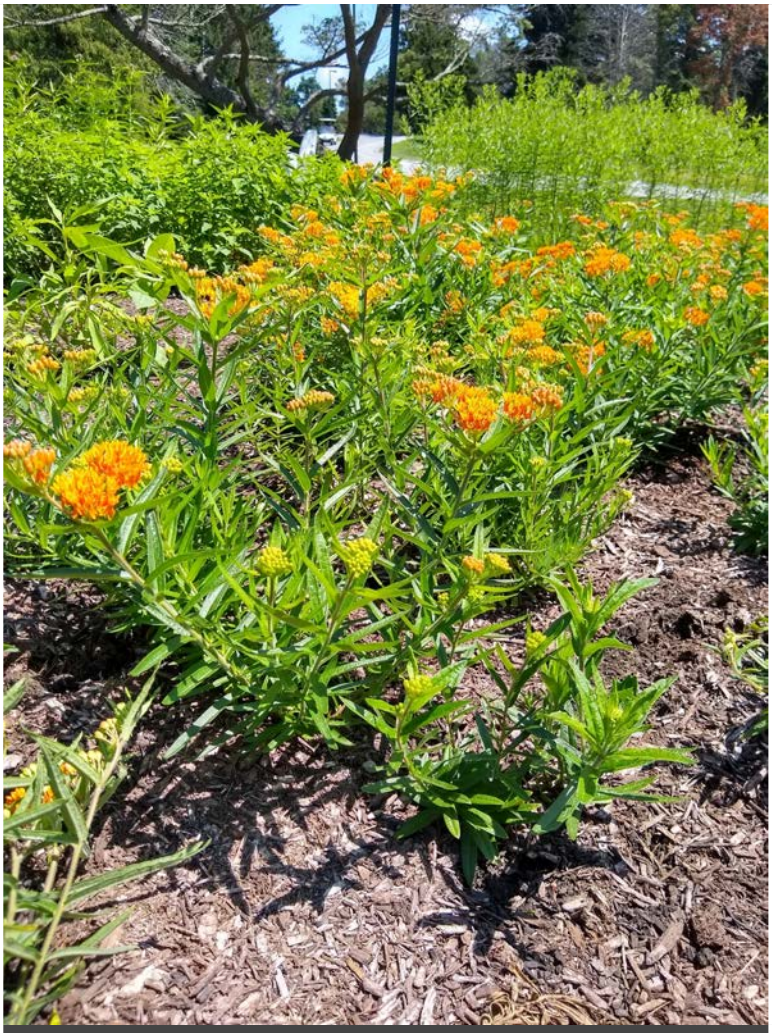
Report on 2020

Pollinator Habitat Creation & Enhancement

The Environmental Cooperative at the Vassar Barns held a pollinator garden maintenance and invasive species removal event on 10/16/20. 15 students at Vassar college joined Environmental Cooperative Director Jen Rubbo and Environmental Outreach and Education Assistant Lauren Bell for an afternoon of maintenance at the Sunset Lake Pollinator Garden, located on Vassar's campus. 10 students worked in the pollinator garden to remove weeds and carry out fall cleaning work. The garden remains in very good condition. 5 students worked to remove invasive species from nearby recent tree plantings. Porcelain berry was the main invasive species that had to be removed. Students clipped and removed the porcelain berry, removed mugwort and fixed tree guards that had slanted or fallen down.



Pollinator garden created by students on Vassar College's campus

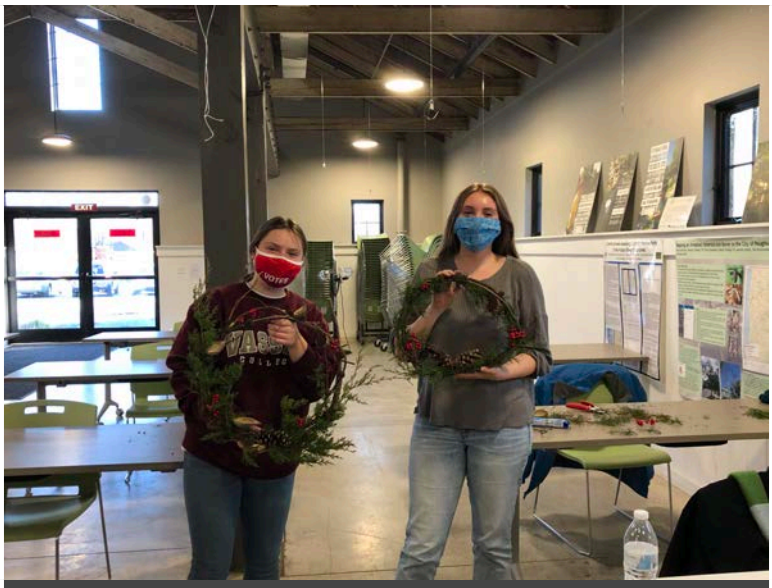


Butterfly weed (Asclepias tuberosa) in Vassar pollinator garden

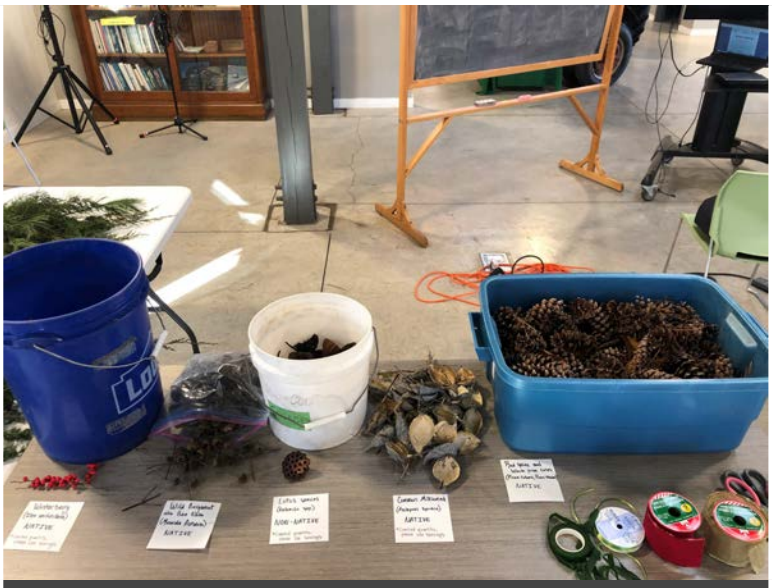
Education & Outreach

The Environmental Cooperative held a pollinator garden maintenance and invasive species removal event on 10/16/20. 15 students at Vassar college joined Environmental Cooperative staff for an afternoon of maintenance at the Sunset Lake Pollinator Garden, located on Vassar's campus. Students helped to execute a fall clean up, weeding, and also helped with the removal of invasive species from nearby tree plantings. The Environmental Cooperative and the Vassar Farm and Ecological Preserve ran an invasive species hike for Vassar students at the Ecological Preserve. Vassar students joined SCA members Lauren Bell and Laura Stark for a 2 mile walk to learn about invasive species identification and management. The last part of the walk went through part of the old fields, where the importance of native, pollinator plants was discussed. The Environmental Cooperative and the Vassar Farm and Ecological Preserve held a wreath making event on 11/18/20. Before the event, Vassar students and employees removed invasive bittersweet vines. These vines (with the

seeds removed) were used at the event to make the wreaths. 15 Vassar students attended the event and learned about the importance of invasive species management. Bee balm and milkweed seed pods were used to decorate the wreaths and the two employees who ran the event educated students about the importance of these plants for pollinators.



Students at wreath-making event at Vassar College



Materials used for wreath-making event at Vassar College

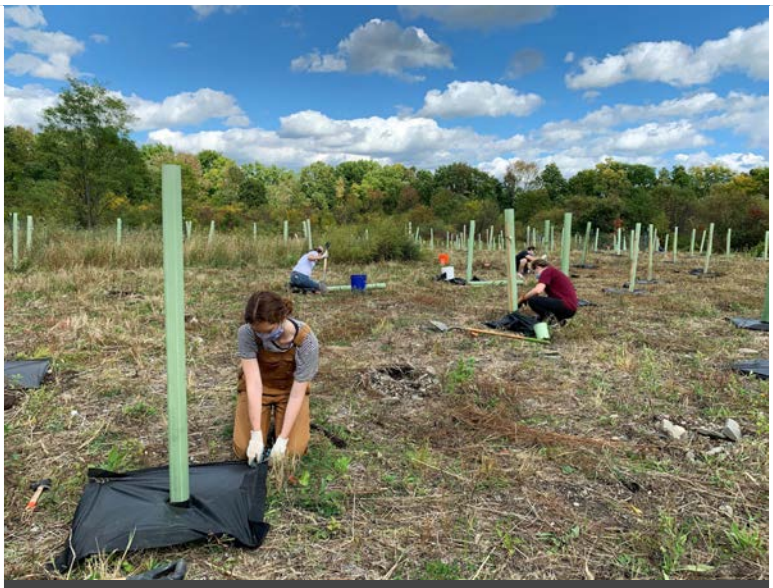
Courses & Continuing Education

Biol 208, Plant Diversity and Evolution: Plant structure and function is examined in a phylogenetic context. Emphasis is placed on adaptations to novel and changing environments as well as plant-animal and plant-fungal coevolution, including plant-pollinator and plant-herbivore interactions. Laboratories include comparative study of the divisions of plants and the identification of locally common plants and fungi in the field. Taught by Professor Margaret Ronsheim. ENST 260, Issues in Environmental Studies: The purpose of this course is to examine in depth an issue, problem, or set of issues and problems in environmental studies, to explore the various ways in which environmental issues are embedded in multiple contexts and may be understood from multiple perspectives. The course topic changes from year to year. Topic for 2020/21b: Sound, Sonic Art, and the Environment. This course considers the roles of sound in natural environments and sound art as an environmentalist practice. Students read, listen to, and interact with primary thinkers, practitioners, and artists in the related fields of soundscape studies, acoustic ecology, ecomusicology, and ecological sound art. We seek to analyze and understand sounds as they occur in natural environments, consider the impact of human-made sounds on environmental health, and develop our capacities for deep listening, field recording, and soundscape composition as skill sets for environmental thinking and advocacy. Taught by Professor Jonathan Chenette. Biol 241, Ecology: Population growth, species interaction, and community patterns and processes of species or groups of species are discussed. The course emphasizes these interactions within the framework of evolutionary theory. Local habitats and organisms are used as

examples of how organisms are distributed in space, how populations grow, why species are adapted to their habitats, how species interact, and how communities change. Field laboratories at Vassar Farm and other localities emphasize the formulation of answerable questions and methods to test hypotheses. Taught by Professor Lynn Christenson.

Service-Learning

Volunteers and students at Vassar College worked hard throughout the week of September 28th 2020, to plant over 500 resilient trees at a restoration site on the Vassar Farm and Ecological Preserve. Students from Biology 208 and Biology 241 (Ecology) joined in the planting as a part of their class for the week. Students learned about the importance of planting native and resilient trees. These trees were acquired through a grant from the New York DEC's Tree's for Tributaries Program and included oaks, pines, poplars and more. The hundreds of trees planted at this site will help improve the water quality at the Preserve, connect a section of the forest and will add to the amount of carbon sequestered at the Ecological Preserve. Connecting two pieces of the forest is very important for a variety of species, including pollinators, at the Preserve. These hardy trees will also help prevent the spread of more invasive species to the north section of the Ecological Preserve.



Vassar students involved in tree planting event at Vassar Farm and Ecological Preserve.

Vassar students at tree planting event on the Vassar Farm and Ecological Preserve

Educational Signage

Making the World Safer for Pollinators
Bee Campus USA™
One Campus at a time
An initiative of the Xerces Society

XERCES SOCIETY
for Invertebrate Conservation

Policies & Practices

Goals of Vassar's IPM plan: An Integrated Pest Management plan is a set of guidelines which provides a framework for sustainable management of pests by using educational, biological, physical, and chemical tools to reduce both economic, environmental, and health risks. In this document, "pests" refers to both animals and plants that pose some risk to the college or campus users. This includes organisms such as invasive vines, insects and mammals that are destructive to landscaping, natural areas, and infrastructure. At Vassar College, the goals of the IPM program are the following: 1. Control pests which pose a threat to campus users, landscaping, and the ecology of campus natural areas. 2. Prevent pest caused damages to buildings and infrastructure. 3. Protect the health of the community by employing the least-toxic strategies for pest control. 4. Reduce the use of chemicals known to be toxic to both humans and the environment. 5. Create protocols for applying pesticides in secured and targeted areas. 6. Establish standards for what context pesticides should be used given that all other protocols have either failed or are known to be ineffective. " The Vassar's IPM plan uses pest management when and where needed, not blanket coverage. Vassar has used the goals listed above this past year.

Integrated Pest Management Plan: Vassar College IPM_FINAL.pdf

Recommended Native Plant List: nativeplantspt2.pdf

Recommended Native Plant Supplier List: nativeplantsupplierword.docx

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