

# Bee City USA - Asheville

Report on 2021

## Pollinator Habitat Creation & Enhancement

In 2021, we enhanced and facilitated the creation of numerous pollinator habitats in Asheville. As part of a larger project to expand the Wilma Dykeman Greenway by the French Broad River, we continued to enhance a pollinator garden installation led by committee co-chair, Betsy Savely. Over 30 new native perennials and 7 native shrubs were added for a total of 29 native shrubs of 13 different species, and over 200 perennials of 30 different species. The River Arts District Habitat (RAD HAB) was also completely mulched with 2 truckloads of bark mulch and 24 bags of leaf litter to provide ground cover and shelter. Volunteers spent over 134 hours working on the RAD HAB, including nearly every Bee City Asheville Committee member, making the habitat a unifying project. Additionally, private donations from individuals, fundraising events and sponsorships from the Bee City – Asheville Leadership Committee, and grant funding from Pine Gate Renewables and the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area supported the installation of a pollinator meadow to include educational signage. In October 2021, under the guidance of GreenWorks' Eric Bradford and biologist Bryan Tompkins of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, GreenWorks volunteers and staff prepared a 2,000 sq. ft. site for planting by removing exotic plants and turf grass. Volunteers then planted 1,400 native pollinator flowering perennials and grasses for a natural riparian meadow appearance on the Wilma Dykeman Greenway, just north of Jean Webb Park. With over thirty different species of plants, this habitat will support many kinds of pollinators throughout their life cycles. The RAD Pollinator Meadow is transforming a once polluted, desolate landscape into a beautiful, lively ecosystem. In 2020, we launched our Pollinator Garden Certification Program that allows community members to apply to certify their gardens as pollinator habitat. In 2021 we certified 36 gardens (leading to a total of 99 local certified gardens as of February, 2022). The process requires applicants to name the native trees and shrubs in their gardens and native wildflowers blooming in spring, summer and fall in their gardens; and answer questions about their pest management and invasive plant removal practices. Other local organizations and businesses have also worked hard to increase habitat in Asheville. Patchwork Meadows created 6 acres of pollinator meadows for private clients in Asheville. The University of North Carolina Asheville, a Bee Campus USA affiliate, created floating pollinator gardens in a stormwater runoff pond with a Plant Ecology class. The floating wetlands filter nutrients, include native pollinator plants, and support a diverse array of wildlife.





Volunteers planted 1,400 native pollinator flowering perennials and grasses for a natural riparian Pollinator Meadow on the Wilma Dykeman Greenway.



In 2021, we certified 36 more gardens through our Pollinator Habitat Certification Program, totaling 99 local gardens as of February 26, 2022.



The River Arts District Habitat (RAD HAB) was mulched with 2 truckloads of bark mulch and 24 bags of leaf litter to provide ground cover and shelter.

## Education & Outreach

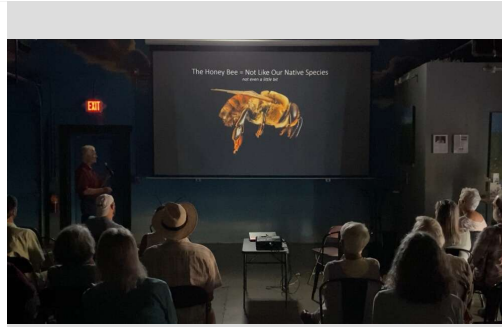
In 2021, we were able to facilitate multiple events that contributed to local pollinator education and outreach while creatively navigating the global pandemic. Earlier in the year we held our Great Buzz Gathering – an event opportunity for folks involved with pollinator conservation and advocacy to join together and discuss what they have been working on and how we could all collaborate in the coming year. Our annual weeklong Pollination Celebration! in June featured 8 events held online or safely outdoors whenever possible. Leading USGS wildlife biologist, native bee expert, and macro insect photographer, Sam Droege, came to town to give a presentation through Bee City Asheville. With about 50 attendees, Droege explored regional bee diversity, featuring specialist bees and plant species that support them, and how folks' properties and communities (no matter the size) can contribute to the harboring and conservation of a diverse group of bees. Two virtual workshops were facilitated by local activists and conservationists on the Bee City Asheville leadership committee. The Montford Neighborhood Association hosted a neighborhood garden tour and sold 1200 tickets. At least 700 guests toured Phyllis Stiles' pollinator education-themed garden. Each visitor received a pollinator trivia card to answer as they read signs and visited volunteer-staffed education stations placed throughout the garden. If they completed the trivia card, they were entitled to a native plant (*Thermopsis villosa* or *Rudbeckia laciniata*) which were in full bloom in the garden. Visitors reported learning a lot and were excited to receive the plant. Bryan Tompkins presented on the Effects of Artificial Lighting on Pollinator Meadows. Lisa Wagner presented on Creating a Pollinator Friendly Garden. Emily Sampson of Patchwork Meadows led a Pocket Meadow and Monarch Waystation Tour. Sponsored by Carolina Native Nursery and Reems Creek Nursery, these celebration events were collectively attended by over 200 individuals. Thanks to the other local businesses and organizations that hosted their own events in the name of pollinators during Pollination Celebration!: Carolina Native Nursery, Reems Creek Nursery, New Belgium Brewery, PatchWork Meadows, and Center for Honeybee Research. A 13-member blue-ribbon task force of professionals with knowledge of landscaping with, propagating, and/or selling native plants met 6 times between December 2020 and May 2021 to update the Bee City



USA-Asheville Recommended Pollinator-Friendly Species List and Native Plant Supplier List to include each plant's local supplier and value to pollinators. It provides the foundation for the Certified Pollinator Habitat application and community education about enhancing habitat for pollinators.



Street Creature Puppets brought their 15-foot monarch caterpillar to the RAD Pollination Celebration! finale, held near one of our pollinator habitats with a medley of pollinator activities, giveaways, and education.



Leading native bee expert and macro insect photographer, Sam Droege, came to town to give a presentation on regional bee diversity and conservation through Bee City Asheville.



The Show Me The Honey benefit concert hosted by Shanti Elixirs supported projects organized by Bee City USA - Asheville and the Center for Honeybee Research.

## Policies & Practices

A 13 member blue-ribbon task force of professionals with knowledge of landscaping with, propagating, and/or selling native plants updated the Bee City USA-Asheville Recommended Pollinator-Friendly Species List and Native Plant Supplier List to include an explanation of each supplier's pollinator-conscious policy on pest management. It also indicates each plant's value to pollinators. This list guides our habitat creation and enhancement decisions and we continue to promote this list to the public at large.

### Integrated Pest Management Plan:

### Recommended Native Plant List:

<https://www.ashevillegreenworks.org/native-pollinator-plants-and-nurseries.html>

### Recommended Native Plant Supplier List:

<https://www.ashevillegreenworks.org/native-pollinator-plants-and-nurseries.html>

## Learn More





End of year committee potluck dinner to say goodbye to one of our previous co-chairs, Peter Menzies!

