



Bee City USA Annual Report for 2018 Pollinator Conservation & Education



DECATUR, GEORGIA

EDUCATION & OUTREACH

Throughout 2018, Bee City USA-Decatur, GA ("Beecatur") undertook numerous efforts to educate city residents about the importance of bees and other vital pollinator species, and how Decaturites can play a role in protecting them.



February: Mardi Gras Parade



The year began with Beecatur's first appearance in Decatur's annual Mead Road Mardi Gras Parade. For its theme, "Krewe of Beecatur" chose "Laissez Les BEE Temps Rouler." The parade is watched by hundreds of spectators and is a high-visibility opportunity for community outreach. Our 12 costumed marchers pulled two bee-themed floats and passed out more than 500 pieces of literature that both announced our upcoming National Pollinator Week celebration as well as provided a list of bee-friendly yard practices and plants. Candy (Bit O'Honey, naturally!) and beads were also distributed. At the judge's reviewing stand, Beecatur presented a brief skit about the deadly effects of residential mosquito spraying on pollinators. Following the parade, we took home the prize for "Best Costumes" (beekeepers are never without a costume!).

In February, Beecatur also set up a booth at the city's annual Georgia Arbor Day Celebration. This was an opportunity to distribute literature and recruit additional committee members. We also showed off a colony of honey bees in an observation hive to the great interest of many passers-by. Lots of questions were asked and answered!



“Backyard Builders” was the title of a children’s Mason Bee workshop Beecatur presented in March. Mason Bees are one of metro Atlanta’s most important early-Spring pollinators, and the program focused on how to spot them, where they live, their unique life-cycle and how they are similar and different from other bees. We presented a variety of different homes that Mason bees can live in and then assembled and decorated a simple Mason Bee house which participants could hang at home in their yards -- just in time to provide a home for emerging bees! Two sessions were held of 15 kids (and parents) each. This workshop was also filmed by a television crew for broadcast by Atlanta Interfaith Broadcasting.



Presenting programming related to bees and other pollinators to school aged children is an important aspect of Beecatur’s ongoing educational initiatives. In March, we presented three different programs to multiple classes and grades within City Schools of Decatur. These included a program about honey bees and beekeeping to four Kindergarten classes at Westchester Elementary; a game-show themed Science Day presentation called

“Bees In Jeopardy!” with five seventh grade classes at Renfroe Middle School (this event also featured our observation hive of honey bees); and a program focused on pollination and pollinators called “Pollinator Power!” presented to four second grade classes at Glennwood Elementary.



In July, Beecatur was invited to talk about bees and other pollinators as part of Sand Preschool’s summer camp program “Over In The Meadow.” Then, in October, we presented a program called “What If There Were No Pollinators?” to four second grade classes at Decatur’s Clairemont Elementary. Later that same month, Oakhurst Elementary’s four third grade classes heard a presentation titled “Human Impacts On Bees.”



June’s highlight — really the highlight of the year! — was National Pollinator Week 2018. For our theme, we chose “Bee At Home In Decatur.” Events and activities included:

- An art exhibit called "Pollinator Portraits: Pollinator Photography Exhibition" by photographers Jeff Killingsworth, Michael Williams and Pandra Williams
- A Lunch & Learn talk (co-sponsored by the Wylde Center) titled "Honey Bees & Bee-yond." This bee presentation by Peter Helfrich, Beecatur, chairperson, built on attendees' general knowledge of honey bees and introduced them to the many native / wild bees easily found in backyards across Decatur. (11 attendees)
- "The Bee-autiful Bee Business: Storytelling & Puppetmaking Kids' Workshop" (co-sponsored by Sycamore Art Gallery and Studio) was a fun event for kids with artist Ms. Sylvia Cross. Fanciful, colorful pollinator puppets were crafted from pre-cut paper bodies, wings, antennae, legs and eyes. (25 attendees)
- "The Buzz About Native Bees" - Native Bee Talk & Photography (co-sponsored by Beech Hollow Wildflower Farm), with native plant and bee expert Pandra Williams, introduced attendees to the amazing world of native bees and how these specialist pollinators are uniquely adapted to work with native plants. (20 attendees)



- A Native Plants Talk & Sale staged with Katy Ross of co-sponsor Night Song Native Plant Nursery at City of Decatur's Scott Park Community Garden allowed residents to learn about (and purchase) a wide range of native plants appropriate for supporting pollinators in their home gardens! (35 attendees)
- A Pollinator Photo Safari led by local photographer and bee enthusiast Angie Wynne (also held at City of Decatur's Scott Park Community Garden) gave participants the opportunity to photograph all sorts of pollinators in the garden. Tips were distributed about photographing insects and macro photography generally. (8 attendees)
- "Special Urban Forests in Metro-Atlanta" (co-sponsored by EcoAddendum) was a Naturalist Walk through Glenn Creek Nature Preserve led by EcoAddendum ecology and forest expert Katherine Kolb. The goal was to get residents out into the environment to re-connect with the natural world. (15 attendees)
- A Honey Tasting, co-sponsored by Savannah Bee Company, allowed passers-by in Oakhurst's Harmony Park to sample (and purchase!) a variety of honey varieties from Savannah Bee Company.
- A screening of "The Guardians" a documentary film about the Mexican Monarch Bio-Reserve and the indigenous people who protect it. This event was co-sponsored by Monarchs Across Georgia. (40 attendees)

Plus, all week long we staged Beecatur's Great Pollinator Scavenger Hunt. Like bees visiting flowers, Scavenger Hunt participants visited businesses throughout Decatur collecting word clues to complete a secret pollinator week phrase. A number of incredible pollinator prize packages -- featuring items donated by local businesses -- were awarded.

At Beecatur's 11 committee meetings of 2018, we featured a number of guest speakers including Dennis Krusac (Metro Atlanta Pollinator Partnership and the U.S. Forest Service), Christine Patrum (Georgia State University Botanical Garden), Susan Meyers (Monarchs Across Georgia), Lane Conville-Canney (Georgia Native Plant Society), and Jonathan Seydel III (Atlanta Mayor's Office of Sustainability and Resiliency). Through these guests, we were able to make connections and explore ways of working together, and gain an understanding of where our missions intersect or overlap. This effort led to an opportunity in October to speak at the Georgia Native Plant Society's Partnership Program, where Beecatur also had a table of literature and a slide show presentation about native bees.

Throughout the year, we built closer ties with Agnes Scott College's Bee Society. ASC is in the process of pursuing a Bee City USA campus certification and their students have been enormously helpful, volunteering their time, energy and enthusiasm to our programming and events.

All of these programs were supported by funds from personal donations; bake sale proceeds; City of Decatur's Design, Environment and Construction Division; speaking and program donations; a grant from The Solarium at Historic Scottish Rite (The Community Center of South Decatur); and a grant from the Constellation Community Champions program. In November, launch "Gifts That Grow!" program to encourage giving.

POLLINATOR HEALTH & HABITAT



In conjunction with Earth Day, in April, Beecatur broke ground on the first of several planned pollinator habitats created in partnership with the City of Decatur. The Willow Lane Habitat is a former residential property which the city condemned and purchased. The house was removed and the site volunteered for conversion to green space. At our first community workday, 25 volunteers created planting beds and 75 native plants, shrubs and trees purchased from the Georgia State University Botanical Garden were installed. Additionally, invasives like English Ivy and Privet were removed. Working with members of the Agnes Scott College Bee Society and the

Dekalb County Master Gardeners, several additional work days were later held to weed and otherwise maintain the site.



In September, a second plant installation was staged at Willow Lane, and another 75 plants were placed in the habitat along with mulch for weed control.

In October, six blueberry bushes and 8 native azaleas were planted. The City of Decatur hooked a permanent all-weather water spigot and a hose reel and hoses were donated.

In 2019, Beecatur will break ground on the city's second dedicated pollinator habitat.

POLICIES & PRACTICES



In leadership roles, we have our city liaison (arborist Kay Evanovich), committee chairperson and educational coordinator (Peter Helfrich), pollinator habitat coordinator (Claudia McDavid) and secretary (Angela Wynne). Other committee members volunteer on the projects they are most interested in and / or available to help with. Financially, our Fiscal Agent is the local non-profit community garden, The Wylde Center. The committee is working on their Pollinator-Friendly Integrated Pest Management plan in 2019.

[Recommended Local Native Species List](#)
[Local Native Plant Suppliers List](#)

CONTACT US!

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THANKS TO PETER HELFRICH FOR ALL OF THESE GORGEOUS PHOTOS!