Bee City USA - Lexington

Report on 2021

Pollinator Habitat Creation & Enhancement

Conservation staff partnered with Lexington Living Landscapes, and DPW staff for two projects including organizing a pollinator planting kit sale and establishment of a pollinator meadow on the Brown Homestead Conservation Area along the Minuteman Bikeway. The pollinator plant kits contained Zizia aurea (golden Alexanders), Monarda fistulosa (wild bergamot), Pycnanthemum tenuifolium (narrow leaved mountain-mint), and Solidago caesia (blue stemmed goldenrod). Over 1200 plants were sold, and all proceeds went towards supporting the establishment of our Native Plant Nursery later on in the year. The first year of the pollinator meadow at Brown Homestead focused on removal of Japanese knotweed in collaboration with DPW. In 2022, we hope to establish a pollinator meadow demonstration site to provide pollinator awareness and educational opportunities in town. The Native Plant Nursery had been a conceptual idea for a number of years and with the help and support of Conservation and DPW staff, one of the Lexington Conservation Commission Members spearheaded the effort to make it happen in 2021. Several work parties took place in April and July to prepare the site and erect the hoop house purchased from Pollinator Planting Kit profits. Plants will be grown on site from seed sourced from New England eco-types as much as possible, with the aim of diversifying the plantings in our conservation areas with pollinator-friendly plants and especially for restoring areas that are being reclaimed from invasive plant growth. Future pre-order sales to the public for residential planting are also planned. A second plant sale was held in collaboration with Lexington Living Landscapes in October 2021 where 200 plants were sold to help fund the Native Plant Nursery and its projects. Field edge restoration work on the meadows at Daisy Wilson Meadow by Conservation staff, DPW staff, volunteers, and a hired contractor began in the fall of 2021. The nature of this preservation work focuses on removing encroaching vegetation-trees, brush, and invasive species-which have overtaken the field edges and have degraded the quality of the field both for wildlife and human enjoyment. The work will result in habitat improvements for wildlife in both the meadow and wooded areas and a glade like appearance at the Moreland Street entrance. The majority of the work in the fall was focused on woody invasive plant removal and plantings of native trees and shrubs while plantings of native species in the meadow will take place in the spring of 2022. The majority of species chosen for plantings were considered based on their ability to create and support pollinator habitat.

Lexington Conservation Commission Members preparing space for the Native Plant Nursery.

Education & Outreach

Lexington Conservation staff hosted and supported multiple projects that benefited pollinators in 2021. Starting in January 2021 and lasting through May 2021, Conservation staff organized and hosted a monthly webinar "Lexington Nature Speaker Series" to help keep our volunteers and community engaged over the winter months and during Covid-19. Three of out of the six presentations were focused on themes regarding native pollinators and plants including: "More than just the buzz: Using native plant-pollinator systems as a tool for biodiversity conservation with Dr. Robert J. Gegear", "Bee City with Hannah Mullally", and "Nibbling on Natives in Your Back Yard and Beyond with Russ Cohen". Each webinar was

recorded and made available to watch on our website.

Lexington Bee Company members conducting research on Varroa Mites at the Lexington Interfaith Garden. Varroa Mites are parasitic to bee populations.

Policies & Practices

The Town of Lexington has implemented and maintained a written IPM plan for pest management on their properties. One example of avoiding the use of pesticides in a designated pollinator habitat area is at Brown Homestead. The citizen's group Lexington Living Landscapes (LLL) spearheaded a project to create pollinator habitat garden along the Minute Man Bikeway. Their original project proposal received permission from the Conservation Commission and Department of

Public Works to apply herbicide to Japanese knotweed (Polygonum cuspidatum) an invasive plant on site. However, the group researched ways to manually manage Japanese knotweed in combination with actively planting a cover crop to the site. 2022 will be the second year of the project, and the town is looking forward to alternative solutions to pest management at this site.

Integrated Pest Management Plan:

Recommended Native Plant List:

Recommended Native Plant Supplier List:

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