



# Bee City USA Annual Report Pollinator Conservation & Education 2019

## Gastonia, North Carolina

### EDUCATION & OUTREACH



Coloring Station for youth at Beetopia



Bee City USA Sign at our Center City Park



Beezeebo at Beetopia Event June 19



Earth Day Event at Schiele Museum with Gaston County Beekeepers Association



Our newest educational mascot Miss Polly Nator purchased with a grant we received through the Glenn Foundation

The Bee City Committee hosted an event in June, which they called Beetopia, a festive day filled with wisdom, gifts, and joy of all pollinators. Where we invited vendors, speakers, and bee-related groups to educate our citizens about the importance of bees. Speakers ranged from Master Gardeners to beekeepers. The 'beezeebo' was set up (a controlled space for a beekeeper to demonstrate what it is like being amongst a hive). Due to liability with the city, we chose a beekeeper to demonstrate and we did not let citizens enter the 'beezeebo'. We also had crafts and vendors who sold bee-related items.

Gaston County Beekeeper's Association (GCBA) presentations provide information on the natural history of the honey bee, the functioning of the hive, honey production, the honey bee's role in pollination and beekeeper hive management.

\*Healthy Harvest is a school garden program that teaches 3rd graders about nutrition and growing their own vegetables. As part of this curriculum, representatives teach a class on the importance of honey bees, their role in honey production and pollination, roles of the castes of honey bees within the hive and beekeeper duties in managing their hives.

GCBA maintains two beehives at the Rotary Club Community Garden in downtown Gastonia. This project was originally started by a Girl Scout for her Gold Award (comparable to the Boy Scouts' Eagle Scout program). GCBA assisted her with the original placement, and has since taken over maintaining the hives when she went away to college.

- Gaston County Beekeeper's Association (GCBA) – Bee School (January – April), 15 participants from Gastonia
- GCBA at Earth Day at Schiele Museum – April 6, 2019, 30 in attendance
- GCBA at National Resources Fiend Day (6 schools from Gastonia attended, 4 of which rotated through GCBA's presentation – April 15-16, 2019, 198 in attendance
- GCBA at Woodhill Elementary \*Healthy Harvest Program - 5/1/2019, 68 in attendance
- GCBA at Bug Day at Schiele Museum – 5/18/2019, 108 in attendance
- GCBA at Crowders Mountain State Park, Earth Science Day – 9/21/2019, 200 in attendance
- GCBA at Ashbrook High School – class presentation on honey bees - 9/23/2019, 65 in attendance
- GCBA at Sadler Elementary \*Healthy Harvest - 11/6/2019, 75 in attendance
- GCBA at Woodhill Elementary \*Healthy Harvest – 11/13/2019, 60 in attendance

Keep Gastonia Beautiful (KGB) wrote a grant through our local Glenn Foundation and was awarded \$5,000 to create a "Bee the Change" that will be presented to all 130 first grade classrooms. The curriculum was designed, a bee mascot was created, and many educational supplies were purchased. KGB had a naming contest with 416 submissions, with a wide variety of entries ranging from BEEyone to Chicken Nugget, a kindergartner won the honors of naming her Miss Polly Nator. Educational programs will begin in 2020.

## POLLINATOR HEALTH & HABITAT

We designed and built a bio-swale on top of a former construction site and populated it with a wide array of pollinator-friendly plants, both annuals and perennials. The project was a joint effort between several departments and overseen by staff horticulturalists. There are informational placards placed in the garden to inform visitors of the types of plants they're viewing.

The City of Gastonia also increased their "planting power" by 25% this year.

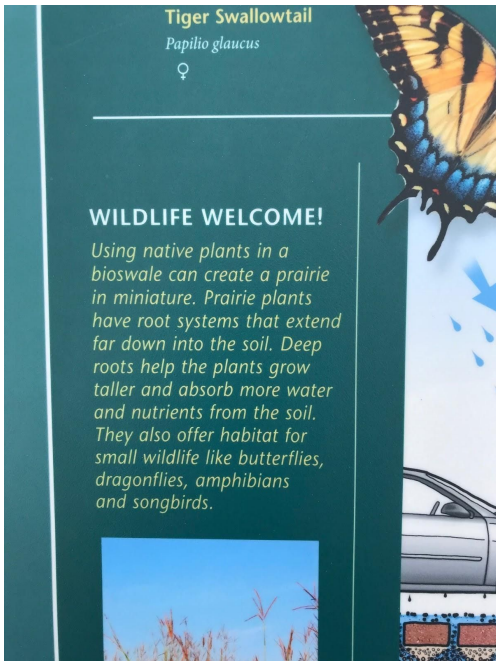




Educational Signs at Wastewater Treatment Plant



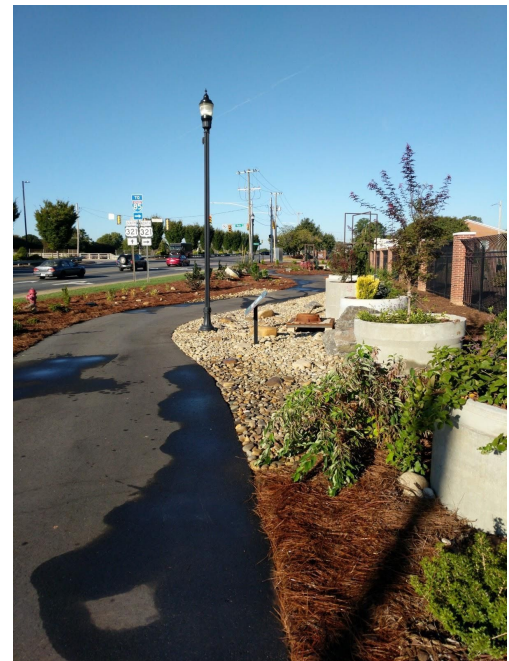
Educational signage



Educational Signage



Sign at sight



Bioswale at our newly renovated Wastewater Treatment Plant

## POLICIES & PRACTICES

The City of Gastonia has reduced herbicide use by 15%; on course to reduce another 30%

- Shrinking mulched areas to allow more mowing and less spraying.
- Overplanting landscaped areas with pollinator-friendly plants to compete with undesirable weeds.



- Prioritizing high soil quality to ensure that plants you've put there intentionally do well to help them compete.
- Use fertilizers considerately so as not to promote excessive plant growth in areas you can't reasonably maintain.
- Organize a more proactive "hand-weeding" schedule.
- Protect borders of natural areas with routine inspection and maintenance.

**Recommended Locally Native Plant Species List —**

<https://www.gastongazette.com/entertainmentlife/20190802/favorite-native-plants-for-landscape>

**Regional Native Plant Supplier List —**

[https://www.cityofgastonia.com/images/keepgastoniabeautiful/Bee\\_City/2017-049\\_Mid-AtlanticPlantList\\_Dec2017\\_web-3page.pdf](https://www.cityofgastonia.com/images/keepgastoniabeautiful/Bee_City/2017-049_Mid-AtlanticPlantList_Dec2017_web-3page.pdf)

**Pollinator Friendly Integrated Pest Management Plan —** None at this time

## CONTACT US!

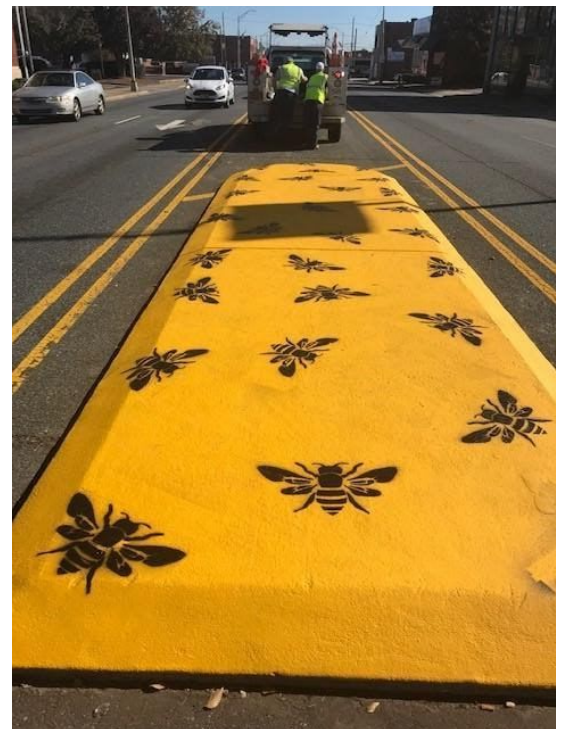
**Committee —** Bee City USA, Merryman Cassel, [merrymac@me.com](mailto:merrymac@me.com)

**Website —** <https://www.cityofgastonia.com/bee-city-usa.html>

**Social Media —** <https://www.facebook.com/keepgastoniabeautiful/>



Bee City Chair Merryman Cassel welcoming everyone to Beetopia Event



Bees painted on median in downtown Gastonia gained attention by USA Today



Artwork outside the Gaston County Building



Clean Graffiti outside City of Gastonia municipal building  
- completed by using a stencil and powerwashing