Bee Campus USA Annual Report for 2018 Pollinator Conservation & Education

Portland Community College
Portland, Oregon

Rock Creek, Sylvania, Cascade, Southeast Campuses

EDUCATION & OUTREACH

Earth Week—The Washington County Master Gardeners Association hosted a table staffed by volunteers to answer gardening questions. In addition, free resources on many topics related to sustainable gardening were available. In addition, there was a display and information about native pollinators. Information about nesting times and pictures of over a dozen native bees and wasps present in Washington county was on display.
The local school, Springville Elementary brought 100 students over to visit the Learning Garden on April 23rd. They were able to learn about bees by looking at the Observation Hive and having their questions answered by Anne Lesenne, our campus beekeeper.

May—Ink Dwell artists Jane Kim and journalist Thayer Walker launched their Migrating Mural Project at PCC. And we installed a Monarch Habitat Garden.

POLLINATOR HEALTH & HABITAT

The Washington County Master Gardeners Association, with its demonstration gardens and renowned annual plant sale, have brought their expertise to the PCC Rock Creek campus. The demonstration garden features a series of vignette gardens showcasing a variety of gardening styles and methods that reflect the Master Gardener philosophy of sustainable gardening practices. The new partnership invites collaboration between the Master Gardeners and faculty, students and staff in the Landscape Technology program at Rock Creek.

New Master Gardeners site next to the Learning Garden at Rock Creek

On a sunny, warm afternoon in June, the Washington County Master Gardener Association (WCMGA), led by Susan Albright and Sue Ryburn with a dedicated team of Master Gardeners, the PCC Rock Creek Landscape Technology Program along with PCC President Sandra Fowler-Hill and Division Dean Karen Sanders, celebrated the groundbreaking of an Education Garden at Portland Community College at Rock Creek. They were joined by several sponsor organizations that worked collaboratively for two years to implement the plan. There has long been a strong partnership between PCC locations and OSU Extension Service. This is the first Extension garden on a PCC campus site. Weston Miller, OSU Extension Horticulture faculty, worked tirelessly to help this come to fruition too.

“This is a great partnership for this campus,” said Rock Creek Dean Karen Sanders. “The campus will have direct access to the association’s educational program, ‘In the Garden Series,’ that will include workshops on bees, blueberry pruning, propagation and managing garden pests. All the workshops are open to anyone who has an interest in gardening, including the general public.”

This unique collaboration allows the organizations whose core focus is education and outreach to the public, to work together on common areas of interest. The garden is designed as a learning lab with educational stations that provide information to the public about sustainable gardening practices. Seating areas are incorporated for visitors to relax and reflect. Native bee nesting stations are installed throughout the garden with some at lower height for viewing by children. The hope is for other PCC programs to use the site as a learning lab for the sciences and the arts.

Plantings will include “Garden Classrooms” for a WaterWise Garden, Pollinator and Insect Habitat Garden, and a Fragrance Garden. Also included will be a wide selection of trees and shrubs that thrive in Portland’s climate. Garden care will be provided by Master Gardener volunteers, though the public is welcome. The garden work schedule and educational and upcoming Master Gardener events are available on their website.

May—The grounds crew, the Habitat Team, E-Center, and Sustainability Department established a Monarch Habitat Garden.

Fall—Through a Green Initiative Fund grant, Arturo Portera with the Grounds department purchased 111 trees and planted 40 trees at Sylvania campus, 6 at Cascade campus, and 10 at Newberg campus.

November 16—The Rock Creek Campus Grounds Crew helped with a local non-profit, Friends of Trees. There were 20 students and two faculty members that helped to plant 450 plugs/bulbs under the large White Oaks in the wetland area on campus. The specific species were Achillea millefolium (100), Camassia quamash (150), Potentilla gracilis (100), and Tellima grandiflora (100).

November—The Beaverton, Oregon Rotary Club donated 70 trees, mostly natives, to PCC Rock Creek campus and members of the club worked with students and staff to plant them on site. Liz Butson of the Rotary Club was instrumental in spearheading this project and plans begin a year in advance with the PCC President, Sandra Fowler-Hill, the Landscape Technology Department and the Rock Creek Grounds crew. It is a great collaboration between PCC and the community and works toward both organization's goals of environmental sustainability, as well as meets requirements as a Bee Campus USA affiliate.

Two hives were installed at the Sylvania campus in the learning garden. This is a collaboration between the Bee Campus USA committee, Sylvania Learning Garden and Sustainability Department. The honey bees live at Sylvania spring through fall and head to Rock Creek to over-winter. Students volunteering at and visiting the garden were able to learn more about beekeeping and the important pollinator services provided by bees. Two apiary tours were hosted during Earth Week and several spontaneous tours occurred throughout the year during garden events. The bees were very happy with their home, nestled between the learning garden and blackberry bushes and produced a lovely, dark honey this year. Anne also got a cover for the bees from Sylvania, and put it up at the Rock Creek apiary. This will be the new home for the Rock Creek bees.

POLICIES & PRACTICES

We include staff, students, and community members in our committee, and invite anyone interested in pollinators to be part of our efforts. We have four campuses with representation from each campus, as well as a center with a learning garden who also has representation on our committee. Portland Community College Grounds crew is going completely herbicide-free on the Rock Creek campus as of 2019. They've already done this at the Sylvania and Southeast campuses, and will be implementing this at additional campus locations in the years to follow.

Recommended Locally Native Plant Species—https://www.portlandoregon.gov/bes/article/40734
Recommended Locally Native Plant Suppliers—https://www.oregonmetro.gov/tools-living/yard-and-garden/plants/native-plants
Pollinator-Friendly Integrated Pest Management Plan—https://www.pcc.edu/facilities-management/wp-content/uploads/sites/31/2019/01/integrated-pest-management_Oct_2015.pdf

SERVICE-LEARNING

We offer tours and education in the garden for K-12 students and the community.

CURRICULUM

During Earth Week, a dozen Landscape Technology students in the Plant Establishment class planted a new pollinator garden at the entry road to Building 4. PCC bee campus committee members were trained in Epipen use and have up to date first aid training. At least four Public Safety officers were trained here at Rock Creek. Public Safety has two kits in their office. Another EpiPen is located in a building near the apiary on top of a big first aid kit mounted on the wall in the lab of Building 4. We only have adult size on campus, but the doctor told us to use that on children if necessary. Stickers were placed on our bee signs in case of an emergency contact for Public Safety.

Beekeeping Classes—We offer two Beekeeping classes, LAT 103 for 2 credit hours each. One in Spring term, and one in Summer term. Both are limited to a full capacity of 20 students per term. There are several other classes that come to the apiary to learn about bees and native pollinators, including Organic Gardening, Propagation, Permaculture, and Biology.

3D design class tackles critical sustainability project to assist mason bees, Photos and Story by Janis Nichols

The hotel's design had a long list of "musts." It had to be cost effective, it needed to consider form and function equally, and its design required a simple yet attractive look, with easy access. The "3D Design" class, taught by Rock Creek art instructor Will Moss, collaborated with the college's Sustainability Program and the Rock Creek Learning Garden on the effort. The garden needed to increase the number of mason bee pollinators to elevate food production more sustainably. Enabling students taking 3D design — a staple in visual arts programs for the past 50 years — to be involved, provided them with a unique challenge that offered real, long-term environmental consequences.

“Some students were mildly intrigued, while others were more enthusiastic,” Moss said. “We spent time in the garden learning how it functioned, and we were shown some nesting materials already in place. Back in the classroom, we discussed the needs of the bees and the technical issues involved. Students worked in groups, sketching with paper and pencil.”

The Mason Bee Hotel in the learning garden serves as a birthplace for these bees. There are approximately 150 mason bee types in North America, and the “busy as a bee” expression is founded on the fact that as few as 200 to 300 females can pollinate an acre of apple or cherry trees. Homeowners and bee keepers have joined forces to create habitat for these bees,” said Anne LeSenne, Landscape Technology instructor and bee keeper at Rock Creek. “We have a fabulous Mason Bee Boutique in the Learning Garden. These beautiful nests are inexpensive to build and are a great way to introduce people to bees and to science.”

EDUCATIONAL SIGNAGE

Warning signs at the location of our apiaries are permanent, as well as Pollinator Habitat signs at some of our pollinator gardens.

CONTACT US!

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