

Bee City USA - Hillsborough

Report on 2020

Pollinator Habitat Creation & Enhancement

The Town of Hillsborough created two new gardens and several habitats for birds, bees, and other pollinators. Additionally, we continue to maintain our previously established gardens. We had a total of 13 volunteers who collectively worked 130 hours conducting pollinator garden clean ups and 2 volunteers who collectively worked 30 hours watering our gardens.



Local Child Admiring the Monarch Butterflies on Pollinator Friendly Plants

Buzzin' Around: Love your ground-nesting bees

BY DOLLY HUNNELL
HILLSBOROUGH GARDEN CLUB

It'll soon be springtime (Yes) with the return of birds and bees. Birds are always welcome but bees and wasps not so much.

Ground nesting bees which appear in the early spring are worrisome to many people when their nests of tiny dirt piles are found in our lawns but they provide many benefits, including pollination services. Research shows that ground-nesting native bees such as mason bees, mining bees and bumblebees outperform honeybees in pollinating flowers and crops. Ground nesting bees are solitary. They build their nests in tiny patches of bare ground where they enter the soil. Female ground bees Do Not make hives like honeybees do but several females may nest in the same area.

Queen ground nesting bees Do Not defend their nests and are UNLIKELY to sting so do not fear them. Males frequent the area for mating purposes, BUT they lack a sting so are harmless.

The visible part of ground nesting bee nests consist of piles of soil less than 1" across. Your lawn may not look as perfect with these little spots, but they DO NOT harm the lawn or the soil. They actually assist your lawn in aerating it and allowing nutrients and water to enter. This is important since we have so much clay in our soil which inhibits drainage.

When summer arrives the ground bees are gone and the small holes fill as soil goes back on with rain. If you must rid your lawn of these innocuous creatures, the best solution is watering your lawn in early spring before they arrive. They need dry soil to make their underground homes.

To recap:

1. Ground bees are around for only a short time in early spring.
2. They don't sting or cause injury to your beautiful lawn or soil.
3. And they are excellent pollinators for your flowering perennials and vegetables.

Additional information:

- <https://gardenerspath.com/how-to/animals-and-wildlife/ground-and-wood-nesting-bees/>
- <https://entomology.cals.cornell.edu/extension/wild-pollinators/native-bees-your-backyard/>
- <https://www.petnpat.com/ground-bees/>
- <https://union.ces.ncsu.edu/2019/04/ground-nesting-bees/>

Buzzin' Around is an educational project of the Hillsborough Garden Club in support of Hillsborough as the 35th Bee City USA. Bee City USA galvanizes communities to sustain pollinators responsible for 1 in 3 bites of food we eat and the reproduction of almost 90% of the world's flowering plant species - by providing them with healthy habitat, rich in a variety of native plants, and free to nearly free of pesticides. Bee City USA is an initiative of the Xerces Society. <https://www.beecityusa.org>.

For other gardening questions or to become a member of the Hillsborough Garden Club, please email us contact@hillsboroughgardenclubnc.org or visit our website at www.hillsboroughgardenclubnc.org. All gardeners or would-be gardeners are welcome.

Newspaper Clipping of Bee Related Article



Education & Outreach

Due to the Coronavirus Pandemic, no in person events were held. Pollinator week was celebrated only through virtual events. Fun activities were posted each day of Pollinator Week on social media. Activities were suitable for all ages and included science, puppets, origami, cooking, and more. According to the social media, the page reached 4,505 people during Pollinator week. 200 free packets of wildflower seeds were also available for pick up.

Policies & Practices

The Town does not have an IPM, but we do have a section regarding pest management in our contract for Grounds Maintenance. It reads "No pesticides or herbicides will be used in landscaped or lawn areas without prior written approval from the Project Contact for the Client. All chemicals shall be used in strict accordance with federal, state, county, and local laws and regulations. Any use of chemicals shall be reported to the Client and applied by trained and licensed pest control operators. A North Carolina Class L Pesticide License is required for all pesticide applications. It is the intent of the Client to maintain a healthy, sustainable landscape that will minimize the need for and use of chemical controls." Pesticide use on town property is limited to fire ants, and stinging insects only when they are nested within a children's play area. Additionally, the town also made a wonderful change in our Town Ordinance to encourage No Mow Landscapes with the purpose of creating more habitat for bees and other pollinators. A press release in February alerted the public of the new changes and welcomed all who are interested to reach out for further information and guidance. We started a Managed Natural Landscapes volunteer program and got 50 homeowners to sign up as participants. While we had planned on having in-person workshops, due to COVID, we canceled the meetings. Instead, we started sharing online resources and worked in coordination with the Master gardeners who produced three videos: Edible Landscapes, Rain Gardens, and Native Plants/Pollinators. The videos are about 10-15 minutes long each and will be posted on the Town Website and promoted through the Public Information Office.

Integrated Pest Management Plan:

Recommended Native Plant List: [Native Plants.pdf](#)

<https://www.hillsboroughnc.gov/government/advisory-boards/tree-board/bee-city-usa/>

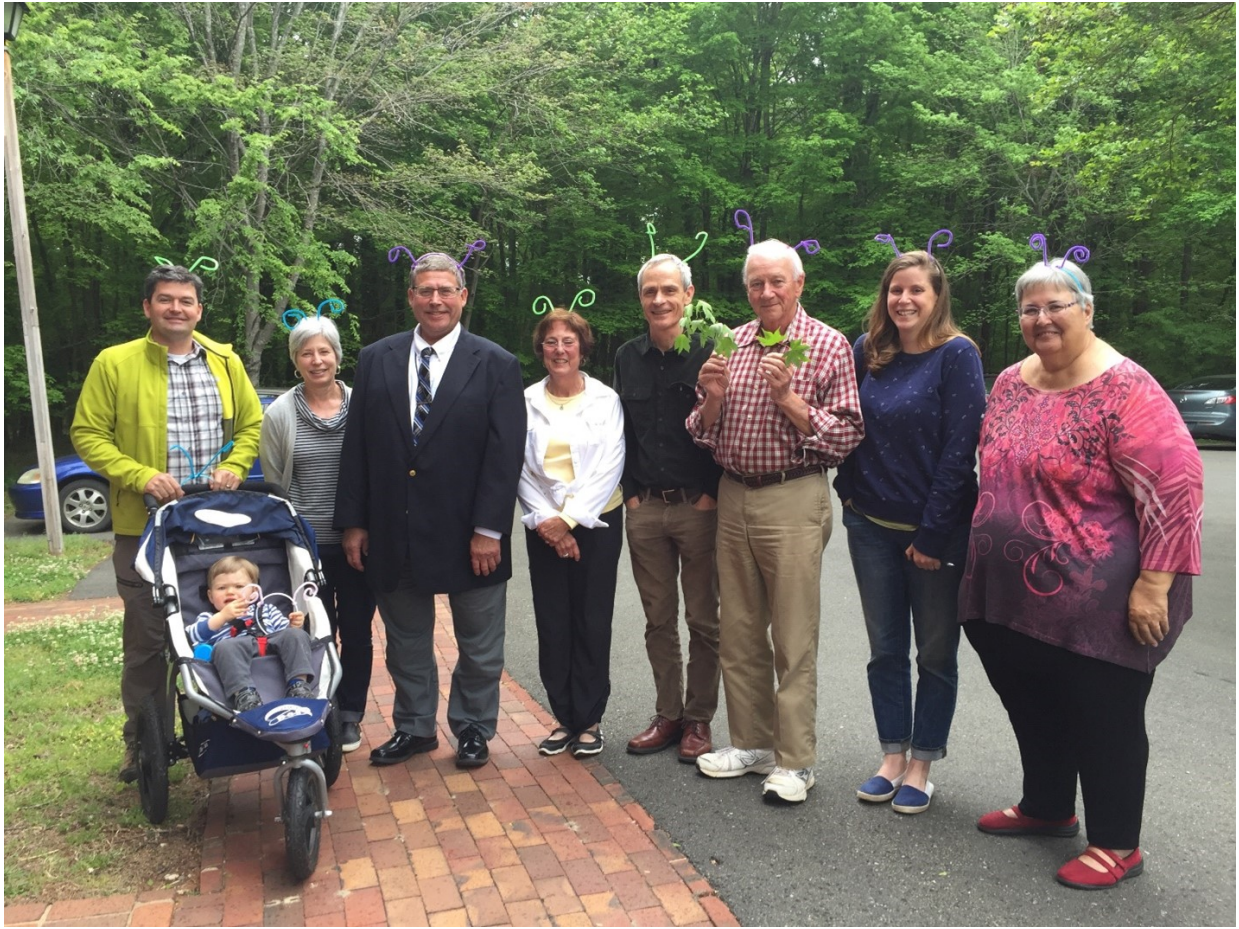
Recommended Native Plant Supplier List: [native-plant-and-seed-suppliers.pdf](#)

<https://www.hillsboroughnc.gov/government/advisory-boards/tree-board/bee-city-usa/>

Learn More

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Tree Board Committee

