

The City of Mountain Brook Becomes an Affiliate of Bee City USA

On Friday, February 24, 2022 the City of Mountain Brook became the first municipal Bee City USA affiliate in Alabama, joining the two Bee Campus USA affiliates, Auburn University and University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Research has shown significant declines in native pollinator population sizes and ranges globally with up to 40% of pollinator species on earth at risk of extinction in the coming years as a result of habitat loss, the use of harmful pesticides, and climate change.

Thinking globally and acting locally, Bee City USA provides a framework for communities to work together to conserve native pollinators by increasing the abundance of native plants, providing nest sites, and reducing the use of pesticides. Bee City USA and Bee Campus USA are initiatives of the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation.

“The program aspires to make people more pollinator conscious,” said Scott Hoffman Black, Xerces’ executive director. “If lots of individuals and communities begin planting native, pesticide-free flowering trees, shrubs and perennials, it will create large-scale change for many, many species of pollinators.”

“How each city completes the steps to conserve pollinators is up to them,” said Bee City USA Coordinator Laura Rost. “To maintain its affiliation, each affiliate is expected to report on their achievements and celebrate being a Bee City USA affiliate every year.” Each affiliate shall hold public awareness activities; publicly acknowledge the commitment to the program through a standing committee, signage and web links; and prepare an annual report on habitat enhancement activities. The affiliate must also prepare an Integrated Pesticide Management Plan (to reduce pesticide use, and expand the use of non-chemical pest management methods on city property), a native plant list, and a list of native plant suppliers, all for use by the affiliate’s Public Works and Parks/Rec departments.

At the city of Mountain Brook’s annual Citizen Appreciation Day event (April 29, 2023) Mountain Brook’s first Bee City USA public awareness event will highlight “No Mow May,” a conservation initiative which is gaining traction across North America. The goal of No Mow May is to allow grass to grow unmown for the month of May (more realistically for the month of April here in the southeast!), creating critical habitat and forage for early season pollinators. This is particularly important in urban areas where floral resources are often limited.

On Citizen Appreciation Day the city is also planning to showcase its plans and progress for its first dedicated pollinator/teaching garden (to be located on the Tibbett Street side of city hall).

For more information about Mountain Brook’s Bee City USA program, contact Dana Hazen, Director of Planning, Building, and Sustainability at hazend@mtnbrook.org.

For more information about Bee City USA, visit <https://www.beecityusa.org/>
For more information about the Xerces Society, visit <https://xerces.org/>