

Bee Grounds UVA Working Group Annual Update

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Overview

We oversee efforts to obtain and maintain certification as a "Bee Campus USA" for the University of Virginia. We serve the University and Charlottesville communities, and the entire country, as part of this national initiative created by the Xerces Society.

Our Vision | To further the University's legacy of environmental stewardship, community outreach, and education and to ensure a better future for our local community by acknowledging that it is embedded within the larger ecosystem.

Our Mission | We strive for the protection of pollinator species through stewardship, by creating and maintaining habitat for pollinator species, and through education, by modeling and promoting sustainable landscaping practices and fostering community involvement.

Goals or Projects

- Develop campus habitat plan
 - *In Progress:* Pollinator Habitat Chapter in UVA's Landscape Management Plan
- Sponsor service-learning projects at the University
- Host events, workshops, presentations about pollinator conservation
- Offer pollinator-focused courses and curriculum

Yearly Progress Update

We are on social media!

Bee Grounds UVA had a logo designed, and created a twitter, instagram, and facebook account. Currently there are few followers, but we hope to start making regular posts soon to attract more followers with the help of our new intern, Jared.

- [Bee Grounds UVA Twitter](#)
- [Bee Grounds UVA Facebook](#)
- [Bee Grounds UVA Insta](#)

We have an intern!

Jared Stanley heard about Bee Grounds UVA through Dr Jessamyn Manson in the Biology Department, who was an active participant in our outreach event brainstorm session. Jared offered to volunteer their time to help Bee Grounds UVA, specializing in social media posting. Jared has also been working on planning fun activities to accompany the bee highlight shorts. They hope to distribute native flower seeds to followers of Bee Grounds UVA, so that they may grow their own pollinator food home and observe the visitors that come in the summer of 2021.

If you would like to participate in this cool activity and learn more about pollination, contact us!

Where are we in terms of application?

Bee Grounds UVA has made so much progress this year, from just getting started and gaining interest across campus, to becoming a working group under ESS, planning outreach events, and welcoming our first intern. Our current aim is to finish the habitat management plan, publish our first outreach videos (bee species highlights), and officially establish a committee. Once we complete these major landmarks, we will go forwards in writing our application to submit to the Xerces Society in 2021.

Presentations (newest first):

Blandy Education & Outreach Team (Jun 2020) - A member of UVA Sustainability asked Bee Grounds UVA if we could provide some kind of homeschooling material for parents stuck at home with their kids due to COVID. We were delighted by the request and pulled together a group of supporters from Blandy Experimental Farm to brainstorm how we would do this. Ultimately, we settled on producing several 1-minute presentations highlighting one cool bee at a time to be shared on social media. Bee Grounds UVA hopes to release the first of these videos soon.

Notable take-aways:

- Down the line, the possibility remains open that we could develop a program spanning the entire summer that would involve more in-depth presentations, outdoor activities, live Q&A meetings with bee scientists, and even an art competition!

Proto-Committee Meeting Presentation (Apr 2020) - Bee Grounds UVA hosted its first committee meeting! We brought together eight enthusiastic partners from five different groups. We discussed the focus and priorities for our working group, and began developing

our mission and vision statements. We also covered ways to diversify our membership from different departments at UVA and potential areas to install or enhance pollinator habitat. Lastly, we used a post-meeting survey to gather additional feedback.

Notable take-aways:

- Set priorities: writing habitat plan, holding outreach event(s), and applying for certification.

Environmental Stewardship Subcommittee (Feb 2020) - Bee Grounds UVA gave a 10-minute overview presentation about the importance of bees, threats to pollinators, and the potential to celebrate UVA's grounds as a certified Bee Campus. After additional one-on-one meetings and discussions among the Sustainability staff, "Bee Grounds UVA" became a working group under ESS!

Notable take-aways:

- The stormwater working group suggested stormwater infrastructure, like bioswales, as the perfect location to plant more pollinator habitat.
- The community/student garden could prove to be an excellent outreach and stewardship tool for increasing visibility of pollinator-friendly activities.

Environmental Science Organization (Feb 2020) - Bee Grounds UVA gave their first presentation after connecting with Morgan Foster, the co-president of the undergraduate Environmental Science Organization. The presentation focused on the importance of pollinators and the fascinating life history of bees, with pinned bees and monarch butterflies on display for everyone to see! Lastly, the concluding activity invited participants to imagine what they would like to see in the student/community garden - from herbs, vegetables, and flowers, to areas for sitting or socializing, and even interpretive signage for bee boxes.

Notable take-aways:

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- There are many great opportunities for collaboration with ESO for outreach and service projects.

Thanks for your continued support!

Resources and Contact Information

- [Bee Grounds UVA Twitter](#)
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- [Bee Grounds UVA Insta](#)