Highlands is a Bee City

In 2018 the Town of Highlands became a certified bee city. As a community agreed to work to help protect our local pollinators. North America is home to approximately 4,000 species of native bees and many other pollinators such as butterflies, moths, flies, beetles and birds. These important species play a critical role in our ecosystem. Keeping our local pollinators numerous and happy helps to keep our ecosystem functioning. Our pollinators face threats including: loss of habitat, disease and poisoning due to pesticide use. As a community we can help protect our pollinators by planting native species of plants, Creating nesting habitat, and limiting pesticide use. We hope you will join the Bee City Highlands team in supporting our pollinators!

Partner organizations:

Highlands Plateau Greenway

Highlands Biological Station

The Mountain

Retreat and Learning Center

Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust
"Saving Special Places since 1909"

How you can help native pollinators:

Including native plant species in your garden can help to create a refuge for native pollinators in search for food, and leaving a few small brush piles can provide shelter to these species we all love so much. By creating a landscape with a diversity of blooms and bloom times, you can help feed these species throughout the growing season. Another way you can help is to minimize your use of pesticides and keep your brush piles year round. As messy as they may look, pollinators rely on these piles for shelter during the cooler months. Below is a list of plants that grow well and look beautiful up here in Highlands while also providing food sources for our beloved bees.

These happy workers and busy bees need protection. Pesticides, overgrazing, climate change, and new diseases are putting many of these species on the endangered list, and bees have a difficult enough life cycle without these problems.

Bumblebees are one of the few pollinator species that have a symbiotic relationship with plants: they get to drink as much nectar as they please, but they also help the flower reproduce. Some species only take the nectar - bumblebees help bring about a new generation. So, not only would we lose our friends, but we could also lose some of our favorite flowers. For more information on what you can do to help, visit www.xerces.org.

Native Plants for Native Bees

Grasses

Deschampsia cespitosa, Tufted hairgrass

Herbaceous plants

Achillia millefolium, Yarrow
Actaea racemosa, Black cohosh
Angelica triquinata, Mountain angelica
Asclepias incarnata, Swamp milkweed
Asclepias tuberosa, Butterfly milkweed
Baptisia tinctoria, Wild indigo
Chelone lyonii, Pink turtlehead
Cirsium discolor, Field thistle
Coreopsis lanceolata, Lance-leaved coreopsis
Coreopsis pubescens, Tickseed
Echinacea purpurea, Purple coneflower
Eryngium yuccifolium, Rattlesnake master
Eupatorium sp., Bonesets,
Eutrochium sp., Joe pye weed
Gentiana andrewsii, Bottle gentian
Geranium maculatum, Cranesbill
Helenium autumnale, Helen's flower
Impatiens capensis, Spotted jewelweed
Impatiens pallida, Pale jewelweed
Leucathoe fontanisiana, Dog hobble
Liatris spicata, Blazing star
Lobelia, siphilitica, Great blue lobelia
Monarda bradburiana, Beebalm
Monarda fistulosa, Wild bergamot
Osmunda cinnamomea, Cinnamon fern
Penstemon canescens, E. gray beardtongue
Penstemon digitalis, Foxglove beardtongue
Pontederia cordata, Pickerelweed
Pycnanthemum sp., Mountain mint
Rosa spp., Roses
Rudbeckia triloba, Black-eyed Susan, coneflower
Salvia lyrata, Wild sage
Sambucus sp., Elderberry
Silene stellata, Widow's frill/starry campion
Sisyrinchium sp., Blue-eyed grass
Solidago sp., Goldenrod
Symphyotrichum sp., Aster
Verbesina alternifolia, Wingstem
Veronia noveboracensis, New York ironweed

Trees and shrubs

Aesculus parviflora, Bottlebrush
Amelanchier sp., Serviceberry
Ceanothus americanus, New Jersey tea
Cephalanthus occidentalis, Buttonbush
Cercis canadensis, Eastern redbud
Chionanthus virginicus, White fringetree
Clethra acuminate, Mountain pepperbush
Cornus florida, Dogwood
Crataegus crus-galli, Cockspur hawthorn
Halesia sp., Silverbell
Hammamelis sp., Witch-hazel
Hydrangea arborescens, Smooth hydrangea
Hydrangea radiate, Silverleaf hydrangea
Hypericum densiflorum, Bushy St. Johnswort
Kalmia latifolia, Mountain laurel
Lindera benzoin, Spicebush
Magnolia acuminate, Cucumber tree
Oxydendrum arboreum, Sourwood
Rhododendron maximum
Rhododendron vaseyi, Pinkshell azalea
Rhododendron viscosum, Swamp azalea
Salix sp., Willow
Sorbus americana, Mountain ash
Tilia americana, Basswood
Vaccinium corymbosum, Highbush blueberry

Policy to Protect Pollinators from Harmful Pesticide Exposures

WHEREAS, the loss of pollinators is alarmingly high, with honey bee colonies experiencing significant annual losses, and with populations of native bees and other pollinators also in decline; and

WHEREAS, these declines are driven by a number of factors including habitat loss, pesticide exposure, lack of forage, and climate change; and

WHEREAS, populations of pollinators can be supported and enhanced by increasing native habitat that is protected from pesticide contamination; and

WHEREAS, threats to pollinators concern the entire food system, where pollination services provided by honey bees and other essential pollinators account for one in every three bites of food and are valued at $20 to $30 billion in agricultural production annually in the United States; and

WHEREAS, the use of neonicotinoids, the most widely used class of insecticides, is associated with lethal and sub-lethal effects on bees that impair foraging patterns, navigating and learning behavior, alter reproductive cycles, and impair immune systems leading to increased susceptibility to pathogens and reduced colony survival; and

WHEREAS, a large and growing body of independent, peer-reviewed scientific studies demonstrate that existing neonicotinoid contamination in the environment can adversely impact birds, aquatic organisms and the ecosystems they support; and

WHEREAS, research has shown that many pesticides, including fungicides and herbicides, can also pose risks to already-compromised bees and other pollinators; and

WHEREAS, the use of pesticides is often cosmetic and is not necessary to create and maintain landscapes, gardens or open spaces, given the availability of viable alternative practices and products; and

WHEREAS, integrated pest management - designed to manage pests by addressing the underlying sources of the pest problems, prioritizing non-chemical techniques and those that are least toxic to humans and the environment - strengthens efforts to protect pollinators; and

WHEREAS, pesticide regulations at the federal and state level, and the risk assessments that inform them, fail to account for many factors that influence the risks pesticides pose.