

Notes from Bee/Pollinator Task Force Meeting, July 7, 2014

(with additions from the Food and Nutrition Commission Discussion, August 4, 2014)

Important question: What could a city or county do to save/preserve bee population?

- Some other places have passed laws or ordinances
- Ban neonicotinoids, harmful pesticides, harmful herbicides
- Educate residents and businesses about what to plant (or not plant) and which pesticides are harmful

Which kinds of bees are dying and are important to preserve?

- Honey bees are not native to US but have become a major pollinator
- Bumble bees—2 or 3 species are already lost

What's needed is long-term thinking like the Seven Generations concept

Who else is involved in bee preservation?

- Dr. Marla Spivak, Dept. of Entomology & University of Minnesota Bee Lab
<http://beelab.umn.edu/Research/index.htm>
- Beez Kneez
- Bee Squad
- Pollinator Revival: www.pollinatorrevival.org/
- Prairie Restorations
- Wisconsin Honey Producers Association

What are other important pollinators besides bees?

- bats
- birds
- butterflies

Resources

Michael Pollans's first book, the Botany of Desire

Several articles in the Star Tribune

Information on native plant seeds—many need to be planted in the fall and freeze over the winter, then will grow in the spring

Mel Bartholmew's Books

Who would be impacted?

- Homeowners, businesses and others with yards/land
- Seed companies
- Seed and plant sellers

- Lawn chemical companies

What are some groups in Ramsey County that could be involved with the FNC?

- Saint Paul Parks and Rec, Mark Granlund, Arts & Gardens Coordinator—possible demonstration garden.
- Ramsey County Master Gardeners
- There are many others with knowledge and skills to share but there doesn't seem to be a network to organize the work.

Actions that could be helpful:

- Encourage converting a percentage of a yard or land to bee-friendly plants without grass
- Plant clover as a ground cover
- Work with others to determine a method to make sure that compost doesn't have harmful substances.
- Encourage garden centers to put together a packet of seeds and/or plants that are bee-friendly.
- Teach people how to plant a selection of flowers so that there is something bee-friendly blooming during the whole growing season
- Plant bee-friendly flowers in the boulevards (Union Park has information on this subject)
- Work with the public to reduce the fear of bees
- Use social media to share stories and ideas to help bees and other pollinators

Policy considerations:

- Research how the changes were made to reduce phosphates as a template for action
- Consider some kind of subsidy such as there has been to build rain gardens
- Look into bee-keeping policies
 - Saint Paul allows bee-keeping but the system is burdensome to work through
 - Roseville does not allow bee-keeping at all
 - Find out what policies other suburban municipalities have
- Check with William Mitchell about help with writing policies or policy research to find out what other cities have done
- Obtain information about the recent policy passed in Shorewood, MN