

## RESOLUTION

R-16-05

### Resolution Designating the City of Decatur, GA as a **BEE CITY USA®**

WHEREAS, the goal of *BEE CITY USA* is to promote healthy, sustainable habitats and communities for bees and other pollinators; and

WHEREAS, thanks to the tremendous diversity of wild native bees, along with the honey bees that were brought here from Europe in the 1700s, we have very diverse dietary choices rich in fruits, nuts and vegetables:

*One in every three bites of food we eat is courtesy of insect pollination. Even our meat and milk trace back to insects that pollinate the alfalfa and other feed for beef cattle and cows.*

Mace Vaughan, Pollinator Program Director for the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation

and,

WHEREAS, bees and other pollinators around the globe have experienced dramatic declines due to a combination of habitat loss, use of pesticides, and the spread of pests and diseases, with grave implications for the future health of flora and fauna; and,

WHEREAS, communities have the opportunity to support bees and other pollinators on both public and private land; and,

WHEREAS, supporting pollinators fosters environmental awareness and sustainability, and increases interactions among community stewards such as commercial and backyard beekeepers, farmers, children, educators, Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, plant nurseries, municipalities, neighborhoods, and garden suppliers and clubs; and.

WHEREAS, the economic benefits of (native and honey) bee-friendliness are:

- Healthy ecosystems--insect pollinators are required for pollination and reproduction of about 85% of flowering plants globally, plants that: 1) are vital for clean air and water; 2) provide food, fiber and shelter for people and wildlife; and 3) support the very insects that pollinate our crops and form the basis of food webs.
- Increased vegetable and fruit crop yields due to bee pollination.
- Increased habitat for natural enemies of crop pests and therefore reduced need for and costs associated with pesticides.
- Increased demand for pollinator-friendly plant materials from local nurseries and growers.
- Income earned by beekeepers and others through the sale of bee products, beekeeping equipment and supplies, and hive rentals for pollination; and, heightened prestige and premium asking prices for place-based honey, which enhances the visibility and reputation of its community of origin; and,

WHEREAS, Decatur, Georgia, should be certified a *BEE CITY USA* community because:

- Decatur is home to a city government, school system, and a host of businesses, churches, organizations, and residents who are already engaging in bee-friendly practices.
- Decatur is home to several community gardens and at least two urban gardens whose mission is to educate and engage the Decatur community. All community greenspaces in Decatur feature gardens that support pollinators and bees. This is complementary to the goals of Bee City USA.
- Although a small town, Decatur is home to at least a dozen beekeepers who are actively maintaining healthy hives which in turn provide pollinators in their neighborhoods; and,

WHEREAS, an ideal pollinator-friendly habitat:

- Provides diverse and abundant nectar and pollen from plants blooming in succession.
- Provides clean water for drinking, nest-building, cooling, diluting stored honey, and butterfly puddling.
- Is pesticide-free or has pesticide use carried out with least ill effects on pollinators.
- Is comprised of mostly, if not all, native species of annual and perennial wildflowers, shrubs, trees, and grasses because many native pollinators prefer or depend on the native plants with which they co-evolved.
- Includes, where possible, designated pollinator zones in public spaces with signage to educate the public and build awareness.
- Provides for safe and humane removal of bees when required.
- Provides undisturbed spaces (leaf and brush piles, un-mowed fields or field margins, fallen trees and other dead wood) for nesting and overwintering for native pollinators; and

WHEREAS, in order to enhance understanding among local government staff and the public about the vital role that pollinators play and what each of us can do to sustain them, the City of Decatur, GA agrees to meet the following commitments required of all *BEE CITY USA* communities:

1) Pass this *Bee City USA* resolution.

2) Designate a local government department as the Bee City USA sponsor and an employee from that department as the Bee City USA "liaison."

3) Assign facilitation of the local Bee City USA program to either: a) a new or existing commission; or, b) a non-profit organization, whose purpose would be to encourage and coordinate local pollinator habitat and awareness activities. This body will serve as the intermediary between the citizenry and local government on matters of enhancing pollinator awareness, health and habitat, fulfilling the following commitments:

- Annually celebrate National Pollinator Week (third full week of June) or some other appropriate occasion with educational events, pollinator habitat plantings or restoration, proclamations or promotions that showcase the municipality's commitment to enhancing pollinator health and habitat.
- Annually apply for renewal of the community's designation and submit a report of the previous year's *BEE CITY USA* activities following the format provided.

4) Publicly acknowledge the community's commitment by agreeing to:

- Install/maintain at least one authorized *Bee City USA* street sign in a prominent location;
- Create/maintain links on appropriate pages of the local government's website which includes, at minimum:
  - Links to a PDF of this signed Resolution and the national *Bee City USA* website;
  - Contact information for the local government's *Bee City USA* liaison; and,
  - Contact information for the designated "facilitator commission or non-profit organization committee;" and,
  - Reports of the pollinator-friendly activities the community has accomplished the previous year(s).

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the City Commission of the City of Decatur, Georgia accepts the designation and commits to the standards of *BEE CITY USA*.

Adopted this 20<sup>th</sup> day of June, 2016.

Peggy Merriss	Patricia Garrett
Acting City Clerk	Mayor