

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Becomes the First Big Ten School Recognized as a Bee Campus USA

CHAMPAIGN, IL – Making the world safer for pollinators through extensive habitat improvements, awareness efforts, and engagement strategies earned the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign recognition as a certified Bee Campus USA—the first Big Ten school to receive this distinction. The Urbana campus becomes the 53rd Bee Campus USA nationally.

The Bee Campus USA program is designed to amass the strengths of educational campuses across the country for the benefit of native bees, honey bees, butterflies, moths, hummingbirds, bats, beetles, and flies that 90 percent of the world's wild plant species rely on.



"This recognition serves as another important building block as we move toward our goal of a more sustainable campus landscape," said Brent Lewis, university landscape architect.

This program was a student-led effort from concept to reality. The student-centric Bee Campus USA committee was formed in the Sustainability Living-Learning Community in Lincoln Avenue Residence Hall, with collaboration from the Department of Entomology, Department of Natural Resources & Environmental Sciences (NRES), and Facilities & Services (F&S) through the organization's capital planning, grounds, and sustainability departments.

"The students of the University of Illinois are proud to create a campus that reflects our value of environmental conservation. Attaining Bee Campus USA designation is important to us because it not only displays our university's commitment to wildlife but also to education and awareness," said Rachel Daughtridge, NRES student and chair of the committee.

The history of campus pollinator support is rooted in ground-breaking research, with the world-famous May Berenbaum, a recognized authority on insects, as a principal team member. Along with entomologist Dr. Gene Robinson, a leader in honey bee research, Dr. Berenbaum coordinated the development of the Pollinarium on campus, which was the first free-standing center in the nation devoted to flowering plants and their pollinators. Throughout the year, the Pollinarium provides tours and workshops on protecting and strengthening pollinator habitat.

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To be recognized as a Bee Campus USA, the F&S and the Bee Campus USA committee developed a comprehensive habitat plan, called the [2018 Illinois Bee Campus USA: A Plan for the Pollinators at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign](#). It includes an Integrated Pest Management program, a list of native planting areas on campus, and an overview of pollinator outreach and engagement. As part of this designation, the university commits to continue hosting awareness events; coordinating pollinator-focused service projects, courses, and workshops; posting signage to educate the campus; and renewing the Bee Campus USA certification annually.

Bee Campus USA is an initiative of the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, a nonprofit organization based in Portland, Oregon. The Xerces Society is focused on raising awareness, enhancing habitats, and celebrating achievements; for more information, visit <https://xerces.org>. For more information about Bee Campus USA, visit <https://www.beecityusa.org>.

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