

## Happy 5th Birthday Pollination Guelph!

The first meeting of the Pollination Guelph board occurred five years ago, on August 12, 2008. Its formation followed several public meetings that supported the idea of a pollinator park at the Eastview Landfill, starting from when the idea was first proposed by then City of Guelph Councilor Vicki Beard on March 19, 2007. During this period there was an ad hoc group of individuals from the University of Guelph, the City of Guelph, and interested citizens operating under the informal names Guelph Pollination Initiative and Friends of the Pollinator Park.

When the group formalized into the current structure, they saw the need to have a wider focus than creating habitat on just one site; thus our current goals of Education, Conservation, Community Outreach, Research, and Advocacy. We have since held five symposiums (not counting one held by the Guelph Pollination Initiative) and made several special presentations, created habitat in six different parts of the City, supported two on-going research projects, sent out 24 quarterly newsletters to an ever increasing mailing-list, given presentations to over 50 groups, had displays at an additional 25+ external events, and provided information to countless visitors to our web-site.

We have also advocated for pollinators, with one of our most proud accomplishments being the inclusion of language in the City of Guelph's Official Plan that clearly states the importance of pollinator habitat and the need to protect and increase it. In fact, at our 2013 symposium, Her Worship, Mayor Karen Farbridge commented on how ground-breaking this was and how it will be an inspiration and model for other municipalities to follow: check out the YouTube video of her remarks at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cuxzKB2dAzM>.

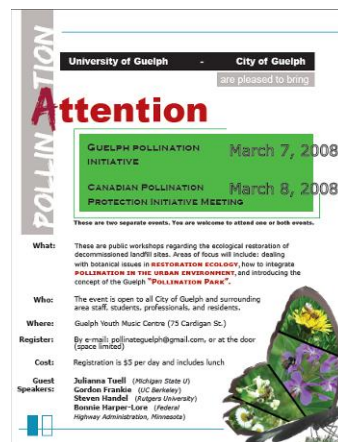
## France's Urban Bees Presentation, 7pm Oct 24, 2013

At 7pm on October 24, Pollination Guelph will welcome back Dr. Bernard Vassiere, a researcher involved with the European Urban Bees project. He introduced the project to us back in May 2012, and will be able to update us on the results of the study. What type of nesting materials in a bee condo will attract the most twig and cavity nesting bees? What type of soil attracts the most ground-nesting bees? Do bees prefer native plants to non-native or cultivated ones? How does diversity vary between populations in urban, semi-urban, agricultural, and semi-natural areas? How did the public react to this project in France and how can people in Ontario use these results? These questions and more will be addressed during the presentation, which will be held at Dublin Street United Church in downtown Guelph. Admission is free, but donations to cover the cost of renting the facility are encouraged.



"Nature will bear the closest inspection. She invites us to lay our eye level with her smallest leaf, and take an insect view of its plain."

— Henry David Thoreau



*The Guelph Pollination Initiative was the informal precursor to Pollination Guelph, and it held the first of what would become an annual symposium on March 7-8, 2008.*



## Free Trees! - Instant Canopy for You and Spring-time Food for Pollinators

Pollination Guelph is a partner with the City of Guelph's Adopt-a-Tree program, which, thanks to a grant from the TD Green Streets program, is giving away 300 trees this fall to residents of Guelph. These trees are large, healthy specimens (1.5-1.8m/5-6' tall) that can fill in gaps in the canopy of your property and the City at large. As a bonus, most are also pollinator-friendly! Often people do not think about trees as being good for pollinators, but in reality, they are an integral part of the diet of early-emerging pollinators. When the maples, redbuds, serviceberries, birches, basswoods and others are in bloom, very few other plants are, hence their value as pollen sources, particularly for bees. As well, the leaves of native tree species are food for other pollinators, such as the caterpillar stage of many butterflies. Indeed, oaks have been shown to act as a host plant for at least 534 different butterfly and moth species!

Interested in getting your own free tree? Register for the program by sharing your name, address and contact information by telephone at 519-822-1260 extension 2107 or by email at [healthylandscapes@guelph.ca](mailto:healthylandscapes@guelph.ca). Details on how to pick-up your tree on September 21 or 29 will be provided upon registration by City staff.

## Congratulations, Bryan and Cathy Gilvesy of Y U Ranch

Pollination Guelph was pleased to nominate Bryan and Cathy Gilvesy of Y U Ranch, the recipients of this year's Canadian Farmer-Rancher Pollinator Advocate Award. Bryan has attended many of Pollination Guelph's annual symposiums and has taken the information he learned from these events and other sources to make a difference for pollinators on his farm. In fact, Bryan and Cathy's actions have motivated other farmers in the Norfolk ALUS program and beyond to incorporate pollinator-friendly hedgerows and other plantings around the farm. The Gilvesys will be attending a special ceremony in Washington DC this fall where they will be presented with this prestigious award.

## Educational Field Trips to the Cambridge Pollinator Preserve

The Cambridge Pollinator Preserve's (CPP) Educational Centre has been open for almost a full summer since its dedication ceremony in September 2012. The CPP project team of the Ancient Mariners Canoe Club (AMCC) of Cambridge, Ontario is currently undertaking the next phase of this project. Whereas the primary purpose of the site is to provide a natural habitat for wild bees and other pollinators, raising public awareness about the threats facing wild bees and their ecological importance is also a goal of the project.

To meet this goal, AMCC members will host tours through the preserve. The CPP project team has assembled a training package to accompany the tours which includes a foldout field guide to help visitors observe effectively, a pollinator recording form and a quiz to be completed on site at the end of the tour. The two-hour tour and the training package will be offered to high schools in the region, targeting mainly Grade 9 level students. But any interested clubs or adult organizations will be welcome to arrange their own tours with the AMCC. As well as watching pollinators at work, the site itself offers the chance to see how the flowering trees, shrubs and forbs that support the pollinating community are managed. For more information, please contact Jim Dyer, AMCC and CPP team member, at [go\\_my\\_way@hotmail.com](mailto:go_my_way@hotmail.com).



*Redbud trees have an abundance of small purplish blooms in the spring, and the insects love them! Leafcutter bees also use the leaves for their nests.*



*Take a self-guided or guided tour through the Cambridge Pollinator Preserve today*

## Ontario Bee Health Working Group

In response to the highly publicized honeybee kills the past few springs, and increasing concern about the effects of neonicotinoid pesticides on pollinators (see past Pollination Guelph newsletters for details), the Ontario government is bringing together a group of experts to provide advice on how to prevent bee mortalities. The Bee Health Working Group is comprised of beekeepers, farmers, agri-business representatives, scientists, and staff from both federal and provincial government agencies. They had their first meeting in July 2013 and hope to have recommendations on how to mitigate the potential risk to honey bees from exposure to neonicotinoids by spring 2014. While not involved in the working group, Pollination Guelph supports its formation, and hopes that it will expand its focus beyond honeybees, as there are many other pollinators at-risk from these common pesticides used in our agricultural areas.



*The new provincial working group will suggest ways to prevent honeybee deaths from the use of neonicotinoid pesticides.*

## Finding Dead Bees

With the aforementioned attention now being paid to potential pesticide-related bee deaths, it may be alarming to discover dead bees in your garden. However, not all deaths are of un-natural causes; indeed, it is not uncommon to find dead bees under flowers or in front of their colonies, particularly at this time of year. The reason? Old age. Like all living things, pollinators too grow old and die, and despite an ecosystem that has scavengers and decomposers that will “dispose” of the bodies, when there are hundreds or even thousands of worker bees in a single colony by the end of summer, as is the case for bumble bees and honeybees respectively, there may be times you will find dead ones.

Bumble bee colonies do not overwinter. As the summer ends, the current colony produces new queens and males. The males leave the nest, search out and mate with new queens from other colonies, and then live out the rest of their short lives by feeding on flowers and sleeping in, under, or around them. You can often spot male bumble bees in the evenings or early mornings hanging onto a flower, acting slow and sluggish. Eventually, they die and fall off the flowers to the ground.



After the new bumble bee queens are mated, they will spend time feeding and preparing for hibernation. They will hibernate by themselves in leaf litter, soft earth, and other sheltered areas. As this is happening, the old queen and the other workers in the colony start to die off. They also often go to flowers for nectar and may expire when doing so – thus additional dead bees under flowers. But this is a natural cycle and in the spring, the new queens will emerge, find a nesting site, and begin their own individual colonies.

*This male bumble bee was photographed barely hanging onto a woodland sunflower. When touched, he fell right off and lay there for several minutes – a sign he was close to death.*

With honeybees, the story is a bit different. The colony does overwinter as the queen can live for several years in the same place surrounded by her retinue. However, the number of workers is much reduced, and so as the summer turns to fall, there will be some dead bees. Indeed, this also occurs throughout the spring and summer with both honeybees and bumble bees as there are always new workers being produced and old workers dying. Add in problems with diseases, parasites, and pathogens, and you can have higher death rates. Then there are predators that will catch, kill, and eat bees – it can be a hard life for sure!

**“If you plant a garden, you believe in tomorrow”  
- MC at Guelph-Wellington Master Gardeners  
“A Day in the Garden” February 24, 2013**