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## Parks and Recreation Celebrates National Pollinator Week

HARRISONBURG, Va. – Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation is creating a buzz with pollinator projects in local parks.

The department is highlighting park projects that have made Harrisonburg a more pollinator-friendly city during National Pollinator Week (June 17 to 23). The projects support our local urban ecosystem and services provided by bees, birds, butterflies and more.



*(Above) Staff works to make Liberty Park more pollinator friendly.*

“Parks and Recreation is being strategic in the management of our green spaces by installing pollinator gardens, creating aesthetically pleasing spaces the community can enjoy while also supporting pollinator species who contribute to an estimated one-third of all foods we eat,” said Brittany Clem, Parks and Recreation marketing and special projects coordinator.

Department staff, with the assistance of various local organizations such as the Girl Scouts and First Presbyterian Church volunteers, have installed pollinator spaces in parks as a step toward addressing the urgent issue of declining pollinator populations. In the past year, the department installed and manages pollinator spaces in the following areas:

- Liberty Park (soon to be a pollinator corridor education center)
- Downtown Harrisonburg Planters
- Westover Park
- Cecil F. Gilkerson Community Activities Center
- Hillandale Park
- Purcell Park
- Water Street Parking Deck
- Smithland Road Dog Park
- Heritage Oaks Golf Course

- Martin Luther King Jr. Drive
- Interstate 81 - Exit 247B

The department installed approximately 6,000 pollinator-friendly plants in these spaces this past spring.

“Pollinators are facing global declines due to habitat loss, poor nutrition, and pesticide exposure,” Parks and Recreation Landscape Manager Mike Hott explained. “It is our job as landscape managers to make sure we are proactive, applying our knowledge to counteract these issues.”

Parks and Recreation staff partnered with other City departments, local related businesses, and organizations in February to host a Pollinators in Your Backyard event. The group serves as an event committee, planning to host an annual event to help educate the public on pollinator efforts. This annual event is a component of a greater Pollinator Plan to establish Harrisonburg as a “Pollinator-Friendly City”, outlining guidelines and goals for the department’s pollinator efforts.



*(Above) Local Girl Scouts help with the pollinator effort.*

The department also participated in the City’s annual Service Learning Program, where a group of Harrisonburg High School students assisted the department with putting together an informative presentation including ideas for upcoming pollinator projects. The ideas were presented to City Council in May.

This summer, the department is celebrating the recent installation of approximately 1,000 pollinator plants in Harrisonburg’s downtown Liberty Park. The public is invited to a Lunch at Liberty Park event on July 19. Bring a lunch between 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. and enjoy live music and community in this beautiful pollinator space. Lunch items also will be available on site for purchase from Mashita. More information may be found at the event page at [www.facebook.com/events/314368806160656/](https://www.facebook.com/events/314368806160656/).

Check the Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation Facebook page during National Pollinator week for more information about our pollinator efforts. For more information about Harrisonburg Parks and Recreation visit [www.HarrisonburgVA.gov/Parks-Recreation](http://www.HarrisonburgVA.gov/Parks-Recreation).

**The City of Harrisonburg** is centrally located in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. It is home to almost 55,000 people. More information about the City of Harrisonburg is online at [www.HarrisonburgVA.gov](http://www.HarrisonburgVA.gov).

