



Anyone can plant habitat for Bees! Some tips:

- Plant native plants
- Use several colors of flowers
- Plant in clumps (on patios—clump containers!)
- Include flowers of different shapes
- Have a diversity of plants flowering all season

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NORTH COAST CURRENTS



“BEE PATCHES” COME TO SONOMA VALLEY

It starts with an idea, and spreads like wildflowers. The Council began planting “Bee Patches” of forage for pollinators working with Sonoma Valley Boy Scouts, wineries, grape growers, and other farmers to create habitat in Sonoma Valley for struggling bees and other pollinators.

Eighty percent of the world’s flowering plants are animal pollinated, and wildlife ecosystems are vitally dependent on pollinating partners. Honeybees, other pollinators and pollination services represent a critical component of healthy wildlife ecosystems and sustainable agriculture, with honeybees pollinating an estimated \$15 billion of agricultural crops annually in the United States. Direct and indirect value could total \$30 billion annually. Scientists and farmers alike are increasingly recognizing the impor-

tance of honeybees and native pollinators, and the reality that they are at risk. Our bees are disappearing, and one important action to help bees is to create forage habitat where they can feed and nourish their colonies.

This year, new habitat “Bee Patches” plantings became a reality through a partnership with Sonoma Valley Boy Scout Troop No. 63, the Sonoma Valley Vintners and Growers Alliance, and local grape growers and other farmers in the Sonoma Valley.

Scouts learned first-hand about bees from Kathy Kelli-

son, educator and former Executive Director of Partners for Sustainable Pollination, at Beltane Ranch on June 29th. Using a glass-sided bee box, Kellison explained about the



biology of honey bees, provided Scouts with insight on honey production. The Scouts also were able to taste the differing flavors of honey produced by bees foraging on different plants. They learned the differences between hon-

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FORT BRAGG OFFICE OPENS!

The non-profit Council has been searching for space to locate its small part-time office to serve the public and our partners. Thanks to the efforts of Mendocino County 4th District Supervisor Dan Gjerde, the Council was able to locate office space in 2013! We are sharing office space

on the coast with Supervisor Gjerde in Fort Bragg in the historic Fort Building located next to City Hall. Office hours are irregular, so call ahead to 962-3052.

The Fort Building is a structure dating back to 1857,

when an army fort was built in Fort Bragg. The Fort was occupied until 1864, and the last remaining building of this military post is located at 430 North Franklin Street. Our offices are now in what once may have served as the Quartermaster's storehouse and commissary, or surgeon's quarters or hospital.



“...we hope “Bee Patches” will spread across the County...” — Tish Ward



“Bee Patches” (continued)

eybees and wild bees, and were able to visit the gardens at Beltane Ranch and try their hand at bee identification. Throughout the day’s educational training, the Scouts were taught the importance of bees to our entire community. The outreach was part of the celebration of National Pollinator Week, which ran between June 17th and June 23rd this year.

Later in the year, in August, the Scouts met again at Beltane Ranch, this time with rakes and seed to put what the Troop learned in June into practice. Working under the hot August sun, the Troop scraped the soil to prepare for seed scattering, then hand sowed specialty seed mix developed by LeBallister Seed Company to support bee forage. Last year, LeBallister reported they sold 1300 pounds of Bee Forage Seed, and the Council hopes this is a growing trend.



The Council would like to thank Beltane Ranch and Alexa Wood for their generous participation in the educational outreach and planting.

This Pilot Project effort in Sonoma Valley is the first “Bee Patches” planting. The Council’s Tish Ward is working with the Sonoma Valley Vintners & Growers Association to plant more acreage in the Valley, ultimately with the goal to have seasonal pollinator plantings that are not only beneficial to the bees,

but strikingly beautiful during the flowering season. These plantings have the potential to draw more visitors to the Valley to view the pollinator-friendly flowers, while at the same time supporting bee forage. Ward says, “The bees need help, and the Boy Scouts have always been great about helping good causes—they are terrific to work with, and we hope ‘Bee Patches’ will spread across the

county.”

If you wish to support more “Bee Patches” plantings through introduction of pollinator friendly plantings on your property, please contact us via email at ncrcandd@sonic.net or call Tish Ward by telephone at 707-996-1370. You may also donate funds to support this project at:

www.ncrcandd.org.

Cultivating Commerce Fosters The Compost Club

The Council launched Cultivating Commerce to support entrepreneurs in new or expanded agricultural business activities. Last summer we were approached by the Healdsburg-based Compost Club, a non-profit organization founded by Rick Kaye (shown in picture on the right with shovel), to assist the Club to grow their business of

producing worm compost from food scraps and other waste, diverting the waste from landfills into a useful commodity.

The Council agreed to serve as the fiscal agent for a grant for the Compost Club, and provided a \$500 mini-grant to the organization to help expand their efforts. Subsequently, the



Council agreed to serve as the general fiscal sponsor for the Compost Club, which allows us to receive tax-

Cultivating Commerce (continued)

deductible donations on their behalf. Most recently, we are preparing to serve as their Trustee in the Kiva Zip e-loan process. As a Kiva Zip sponsor, the Council plans to only endorse borrowers with whom we have some prior relationship and which match the requirements of our Cultivating Commerce initiative.

The specific project the Council is sponsoring through Kiva Zip is the roll-out of increased worm farming at the Bucher Dairy in Healdsburg.

This year the Club installed six worm bins that can process up to 100 pounds of composted dairy manure per week. Their intent is to ex-



pand the farm to a thirty bin system capable of processing up 750 pounds per week, or 20,000 tons per year of com-

posted dairy manure. The Kiva Zip process is designed to allow donors to loan the Compost Club an additional \$5,000 to complete their project.

To learn more about Cultivating Commerce, please contact Susan Warner at:

ncrcandd@sonic.net

Check out Kiva Zip at :

<https://zip.kiva.org/>

Council Member Tish Ward Receives Conservation Award

This past summer, Tish Ward was honored by the Sonoma County Farm Bureau at it's Love of the Land celebration on July 18, and was presented with the 2013 Luther Burbank Conservation Award. Besides serving as the Council's Secretary, Ward served for decades as a director of the Southern Sonoma County Resource Conservation District and has worked with school kids to "Adopt a Watershed." She is organizing other Sonoma Valley grape growers to plant "Bee Patches" habitat beneficial to honey bees wild bees that are in decline. In addition, she is interested in forest biomass utilization, particularly as she notes the increasing number of dead and dying trees in the forest where she lives.

Although she did not grow up in agriculture (she was the daughter of an Admiral, and lived all over the world as part of a military family),



Photograph by Tim Tesconi, Sonoma County Farm Bureau

Ward always wanted to be a farmer. She achieved that wish many times over—Ward has melded farming with environmental protection at the Atwood Ranch in Glen Ellen where she managed the vineyards and ranch for nearly 30 years, using sustainable farming while "walking softly on the land."

Tish currently resides on her property on the Mayacamas Ridge, and is trying her hand at retirement—which actually means she is gearing up to spend more time on conservation efforts in the Sonoma Valley. Congratulations, Tish, on your award!



Rain Catchers

Our "Rain Catchers" program for water conservation has been re-energized with the addition of Oona Padgett, staff water conservationist. Oona is working with Gold Ridge Resource Conservation District staff member John Green at Sunridge Charter School in Sebastopol to develop a rooftop rainwater collection system for the school.

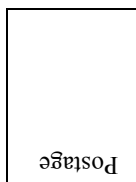


The purpose of Rain Catchers is to encourage collection of rainwater that is generated from impervious surfaces, such as rooftops, then either (1) conveyed to storage tanks, where the water can be stored for later use, or (2) directed to a rain garden or bog that can support hydrophytic plants. Reducing peak flows from discharges off impervious surfaces can lessen erosion and help prevent water contamination by pollutants such as sediment or other substances that the intense flows may contact. Remember:

Slow it.
Spread it.
Sink it!

Credit goes to Occidental Arts & Ecology Center's Water Institute for the phrase "Slow it. Spread it. Sink it!"

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*Building a Better Future for
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*Another of our programs encourages new or expanded entrepreneurship for family farmers practicing sustainable use of agriculture. **Cultivating Commerce** is aimed at assisting entrepreneurs begin new farming ventures or add to their existing activities to create a value-added product which increases economic stability in their operations. Whether adding a niche marketing endeavor such as boutique honey production to an existing winery or pursuing a startup organic vegetable farm, entrepreneurs struggle in developing and implementing a viable business model in our rural area. **Cultivating Commerce** is designed to promote agrarian entrepreneurship while ensuring environmental protection of our natural resources.*

Find us on the web: www.ncrcanddc.org & www.cultivatingcommerce.org

The cost of producing and mailing this newsletter has been donated to the Council—your donations will go to support our important work. Please visit www.ncrcanddc.org to donate to support our important programs.