

A few years ago, I was bike riding with my granddaughter and to pass time we looked for flowery yards that bees would like. Only 10% of the yards had bee food! For all its beauty, Clark Community College where I work has a campus that is a desert for bees! With a 100-acre campus and insects in decline for lack of habitat, I realized that rather than a desert, Clark could be an oasis for bees while also benefitting students.

Bee Campus is a national effort to make the built environment (yards, campuses and other public places) more friendly to bees. At Clark we hope to plant over 10 large native flower gardens to provide food to our hundreds(!!) of native bee species. We will also leave some areas "messy" with fallen leaves and some bare dirt—native bees love dark, protected crevices for nest sites.

By spring of 2023 our first native flower beds will blossom. Clark students will be doing bee counts and bee surveys. Nearby elementary schools will have bee field trips. Clark will offer Continuing Education classes about bees. And from Clark students all the way out to the occasional campus visitor, Clark's Bee Campus will be promoting the timely idea that humans can use a piece of earth while simultaneously providing for "the little things that run the world" (E.O. Wilson).

Above is one of the over 500 (!) bee species that call the Pacific Northwest home.

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