

PRESS



RELEASE

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CELEBRATE NATIONAL POLLINATOR WEEK AND PLANT “BEE PATCHES” -- HEALTHY FORAGE FOR POLLINATORS

The non-profit North Coast Resource Conservation & Development Council (NCRC&DC) is planting “Bee Patches” of forage for pollinators working with Girl Scouts, wineries, grape growers, and other farmers in the summer of 2016 to create habitat in west Sonoma County 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 importance 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 healthy and safe forage habitat where they can feed and thrive.

The NCRC&DC works with local Girl Scout troops to guide them as they plan and design their “Bee Patch” and do the planting, then the troop follows-up throughout the year on how well this bee forage planting effort works! Critical elements in the Troops’ plans include multi-season forage opportunities, water, undisturbed ground for wild bee nesting, and safety from pesticide exposure

Susan Warner, a Board member of the NCRC&DC, reports that the Scout troops have participated in educational sessions learning first-hand about bees from our conservationists, beekeepers, and master gardeners. Warner says, “The bees need help, and the Girl Scouts have always been great about helping good causes—they are terrific to work with, and the girls learn about pollinator habitat needs which they will carry forward as our future leaders.” Oona Padgett, NCRC&DC Conservationist directing the “Bee Patches” program, adds that “by participating in the Bee Patch Project, Junior Girl Scouts will have fulfilled the requirements for the following badges: Gardener, Animal Habitats and some of the Flowers badge. Cadette Girl Scouts can achieve parts of Animal Helpers Badge and Senior Girls Scouts can use this project to support their “Sow What? Journey.” Tiffany Gitten, Girl Scout Service Unit 105 Program Support Manager, observes that “Partnering with the “Bee Patches” for Pollinator Habitat Project is a natural fit for Girl Scouts. It ties into the Girl Scouts' three leadership keys, Discover,

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Connect and Take Action, giving girls a real opportunity to problem solve and work together to help their community.”

Full information on Bee Patches can be found at www.beepatches.org. Funding for these habitat plantings with youth groups in the Sonoma Valley is provided by the Clif Bar Family Foundation and individual donors. The NCRC&DC is a local 501(c)3 non-profit organization working in Marin, Sonoma, Mendocino, and Lake Counties. The NCRC&DC's overall goal is to protect water, soil, and air resources while enhancing sustainable communities. The NCRC&DC works to protect pollinator habitat, conserve water with “Rain Catchers in Your School,” reduce wastes going to landfills by vermiculture composting in schools, promote new and expanding small agricultural entrepreneurship, and encourage use of biochar for improving soil health.

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