



**SF Environment**

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A Department of the City and County of San Francisco



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## Press Release

### **To Save Local Bees, San Francisco to Make Pollinator Protection City Policy**

Bee City USA designation would be first of any major California municipality

SAN FRANCISCO, CA – As bee populations continue to face major declines, and even extinction, in many places throughout the country, City leaders announced today new efforts to protect bees, butterflies, and other pollinators who make their home in San Francisco.

"I am proud to be introducing a resolution this week at the Board of Supervisors to designate San Francisco as a Bee City," said Katy Tang, member of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors. "Through this resolution and our ongoing work to convert pavement to front yard gardens in the Sunset District, we are enhancing the livability of our neighborhoods, creating more sustainable habitats, and keeping our bees and other pollinators healthy."

If adopted by the Board of Supervisors, San Francisco would become the first major municipality in California to become a designated *Bee City USA* and would join 30 other cities and towns across the country who have pledged to protect their local pollinators. The designation would build on the City's existing array of bee friendly initiatives, such as reducing pesticide use on City properties and restoring natural habitats. However, some local pollinator species still remain at risk, such as the federally listed endangered Mission Blue butterfly and the locally threatened Green Hairstreak butterfly.

"Healthy bees and butterflies are a sign of healthy neighborhoods, which is why it's so important that we minimize our use of pesticides and choose plants in our gardens that support the health of pollinators," said Debbie Raphael, Director of the San Francisco Department of Environment. "We have so much biodiversity in our city and free tools like SFPlantFinder.org make it easy for everyone to foster healthy habitats, no matter how much of a green thumb you have."

To engage residents and businesses in the goals of the Bee City USA resolution, the Department of Environment announced today a partnership with Bay Friendly Landscaping (Rescape California) and the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission to hold a training in October for landscape professionals who work on gardens and private properties in San Francisco.

The four-day training will cover sustainable landscaping practices, including reduced pesticide use and water conservation, and will be offered, for the first time, in Spanish language and at a discounted rate (\$150 per enrollee). Landscape professionals who complete the course will earn the Bay-Friendly Qualified Professional qualification and become stewards of pollinator friendly practices that will ultimately impact hundreds of homes and gardens in San Francisco.

“Treating public land and our backyards like urban habitats is key in protecting local pollinators. It’s where we see nature happen in the city,” said Amber Hasselbring of Nature in the City, an organization working on ecological restoration projects in San Francisco. “Residents, homeowners, gardeners – we all play a role.”

Today’s Pollinator “Fun Fair” at Playland at 43<sup>rd</sup> Avenue is part of a larger effort by the Department of Environment to foster knowledge and appreciation of San Francisco’s pollinators and their interconnected role in the City’s natural ecosystem. Fair goers were able to learn first-hand about native pollinators, native plants, and how to maintain and design backyard gardens that promote healthy pollinators and ecosystems. The event drew dozens of residents and families and featured activities organized by over 15 non-profit and community organizations working on urban agriculture, biodiversity, and horticulture in San Francisco.

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*The Bee City USA resolution will be formally introduced to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors at their Tuesday, September 13<sup>th</sup> meeting.*

*To sign up for the upcoming Spanish Language Bay Friendly Training for Maintaining Landscapes Sustainably, visit: [www.rescapeca.org](http://www.rescapeca.org)*

*For more information about the Department of Environment’s pollinator protection program, visit: [www.sfenvironment.org/pollinators](http://www.sfenvironment.org/pollinators)*

### **About Bee City USA**

Bee City USA is a national organization and movement to get more cities and towns across America to make formal commitments to promote healthy, sustainable habitats for bees and other pollinators. Asheville, North Carolina became the first Bee City USA in 2012, and since then, 30 small towns and cities have also passed similar resolutions.

**Pictures from the event are available upon request.**