

# the NATURALIST CORNER

Brought to you by Peggy Potts

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## The Buzz on Bees

and other Pollinators

As a graduate of the Coastal Master Naturalist Program offered through the Clemson University Cooperative Extension, I would like to share my excitement and enthusiasm about the many wonders of nature that can be enjoyed and experienced in the lowcountry. Through this monthly column, I will share my observations, sightings, and characteristics about a variety of nature topics, such as common insects, migrating birds and butterflies, wildflowers and plants and more. Basically, anything in nature is fair game to learn about and explore.

I also encourage you to share your observations and experiences so that we can learn about our natural world together. Please feel free to send in pictures and/or information of anything you find interesting by emailing me, Peggy Potts, at [ppotts@charlestoncounty.org](mailto:ppotts@charlestoncounty.org).



Spring is the season that brings our senses to life. The flowers are in bloom and they bring wonderful fragrances and color to our surroundings. If you see blooms on

a plant you are also likely to see bees. The Honey Bee has been identified as the world's most important species of pollinator, helping flowers and plants reproduce by carrying pollen from flower to flower. The bees enjoy the nectar from the flowers and at the same time contribute to the reproduction of the plants by carrying pollen from the stamen (the male part) of one flower, making contact with the pistil (the female part) of another flower, which creates fertilization.

Many of us may not realize just how important bees and other pollinators are to humans and our ecosystem. According to the Honeybee Conservancy, if it were not for bees, about one third of the food that humans eat would not be available. The fertilization of plants by pollinators such as bees, contribute to the food system as the vast majority of plants we need for food rely on pollination. Plants and trees that require pollination to grow, also provide food and shelter for other animals and improve water and soil quality.

According to a US White House Press Release, Honey Bees enable the production of at least 90 commercially grown crops in North America. Globally, 87 of the leading 115 food crops evaluated are dependent on animal

pollinators, contributing 35% of global food production. Pollinators contribute more than 24 billion dollars to the United States economy.

That said, bees are experiencing a number of threats such as habitat loss, invasive plant species, climate change, pesticides, natural disasters and more. However, there are ways we can help the bees continue to thrive. Planting native plants (plants that grow naturally in our region) that attract bees, as well as butterflies and other pollinators, will help. Keeping a careful eye on the type of insecticide used in our gardens, and allowing our gardens to become slightly overgrown, so that the flowers and dandelions can be enjoyed by the bees will also help.

Understanding the importance of bees and other pollinators to our ecosystem will help us provide a healthy environment benefitting all humans and wildlife. It will also help us become better stewards of our most precious land.



To read other "Naturalist Corner" articles, visit [greenbelt.charlestoncounty.org](http://greenbelt.charlestoncounty.org) under "News & Events."

## Charleston County Greenbelt Program

There are many Greenbelt properties where you can enjoy nature and observe the blooming flowers as spring brings them to life! For a list and description of our protected properties open to the public, visit the Greenbelt Programs website at [greenbelt.charlestoncounty.org](http://greenbelt.charlestoncounty.org), and don't forget to follow us on the Greenbelt Programs Facebook page. When you visit any of our sites, take a picture and post it to Instagram using the hashtag #ccgreenbelt.