

Pollinator plants:

**Background:** Hendersonville is a BeeCity/USA City and has an invested interest in promoting pollinator plant species. Hendersonville is also a signatory to the Mayors Monarch Pledge which supports a wide variety of actions from planting native pollinator plants on municipal property to possibly distributing pollinator plants to the citizen community.

Blue Ridge Community College is a BeeCity/USA Campus and likewise has an interest in promoting pollinator plant species. Further the Horticulture Department has an interest in ensuring students are aware of native pollinator plants and are proficient in propagation of those plants

It can be difficult to acquire pollinator plants that are assured to be true to the native species or cultivar desired and known to be grown without harmful systemic pesticides. Further, most plants sold in the retail trade are larger in size and more costly than necessary for larger scale plantings, making purchase of large numbers for municipal plantings problematic.

Blue Ridge Community College has a horticulture department that has expertise in growing plants, including natives, from seed. The head of the Department teaches numerous classes in native, pollinator plants and has the experience and knowledge to propagate and maintain regionally important species.

**The proposal:** The City of Hendersonville could enter into a contractual agreement with the BRCC Horticulture Department to propagate an adequate number of seedlings to be used to plant planned municipal demonstration beds as well as possibly promoting pollinator plantings by citizens through plant giveaways similar to the tree distributions conducted by the tree board.

The proposed agreement could use funds from the 2023 ESB budget to support the contract and allow BRCC to purchase seeds and propagation materials which could ultimately provide the City with plants. Under the suggested arrangement, in the first year, 50 percent of all plants grown would be provided back to Hendersonville for use in City plantings or other activities. The remaining plants would be available for BRCC to sell as they see fit to provide funding for future similar efforts.