

## The 2024 Great Southeast Pollinator Census

On August 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> community members across Georgia, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Florida will join to count pollinators as part of the sixth annual Great Southeast Pollinator Census (<https://GSePC.org>). Over the past three years over 35,000 counts were submitted! We are looking forward to welcoming Florida counters this year.

Participants are asked to count the insects that land on a favorite pollinator plant for 15 minutes. A “favorite” pollinator plant is one that shows an abundance of insect activity. Counters place the insects they find into one of eight categories:

- bumble bees
- carpenter bees
- small bees
- honey bees
- wasps
- flies
- butterflies/moths
- other insects

The goals of the project are to gather data on our pollinator insect population, to create sustainable pollinator habitat, and to increase entomological literacy around these insects. The project is housed on a website (<https://GSePC.org>) that contains all the information that someone needs to be part of the project. *The Insect Counting and Identification Guide* gives detailed instructions on counting, a video explains the process, and counting sheets are available for downloading. Interested citizens can sign up for a monthly newsletter full of information on pollinator gardening and insect identification.

This project is perfect for schools doing STEAM work. Under the “educators” tab on the website teachers will find all the resources needed for their classrooms to successfully participate, including lesson plan links. Educational pieces are posted on the Southeast Pollinator Census

Facebook page and the @SoutheastPollinators Instagram page. Students feel empowered to be a part of an important initiative.

The project is a natural fit for families who want to participate in insect conservation. Businesses are involved either by having their employees participate as a company outreach or by having events at the place of businesses to attract conservation-minded customers (like breweries or restaurants). Civic groups also enjoy participating.

Won't you join us this year? We are protecting our pollinators one count at a time! For more information contact your local UGA Cooperative Extension office or Becky Griffin, project coordinator, at [beckygri@uga.edu](mailto:beckygri@uga.edu).