

Cultivating Conservationists: Promoting Native Species, Pollinators and Nature Literacy at Botanical Garden of the Piedmont

Albemarle Garden Club

Albemarle Garden Club is partnering with six local organizations, The Botanical Garden of the Piedmont, the Charlottesville-Albemarle Technical Education Center (CATEC), the Jefferson Madison Regional Library, Virginia Master Naturalists, the Piedmont Bird Club, and Charlottesville Area Tree Stewards in the 2023 Bessie Boccock Carter Conservation Award project, Cultivating Conservationists: Promoting Native Species, Pollinators and Nature Literacy at the Botanical Garden of the Piedmont.

The project has three focus areas. The first focus is to promote pollination through working with CATEC and local high school students as they design, build and install mason bee nests in areas adjacent to BGP's wildflower meadow that attract pollinators and birds to the Garden. The second focus is to enable native species—and the fauna they support—to thrive as invasive species in new areas of the Garden are removed. Improvement has already been seen in the water quality of a stream traversing the site and the health of two rare butternut trees as a result of these efforts. The third focus is to educate the public about the importance of supporting a healthy ecosystem. New trails and gathering areas will be created—outdoor classrooms—to host nature literacy and other educational programs focusing on pollinators, natural resource conservation, and protecting our environment. Additional books will be purchased, adding to the collection for the nature literacy program, “Explore to Read,” specifically addressing issues such as conservation, invasive plants and their impact on habitat, and pollinators.