

Operation Pollinator: Improving Golf Course Habitat For Pollinating Insects

Stone Mountain Golf Club
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Issue

Declining pollinator populations in the United States, and around the world, is cause for serious concern. Some view golf courses as part of the problem, but there are actually many ways that golf courses can help support and grow pollinator populations. Carefully planning maintenance practices so that they will not impact pollinators, and creating habitat are two ways that golf courses can help pollinator populations. At the Stone Mountain Golf Club, developing environmental programs that benefit wildlife on the property is an important goal. Establishing pollinator sanctuaries on the golf course and documenting their habitat value was consistent with this goal. The sanctuaries would provide habitat for pollinators and would present an opportunity to study the impact of golf courses on local pollinators.

Action

An area was set aside and prepared as habitat for pollinators. The golf course selected a location that was highly visible but posed minimal risk of golfers being stung by bees. The location was adjacent to the new pump station and lake, a place that golfers could easily see but was well out of play. A cart path is located approximately 30 yards from the pollinator plot, allowing all golfers to view the plot during their round of golf.

The area was prepped and then planted with native wildflower seeds. The seeds were watered only during the first two weeks to aid in establishment. A fence was placed around the entire area to limit damage from Canada Geese.

Results

The native seed mixture grew well at the site, quickly providing resources for pollinators and beautiful wildflowers. An impressive number and variety of pollinators were attracted to the area, including butterflies, bees and even hummingbirds. Pollinator activity gradually increased during the first year and continues to increase today. The pollinator sanctuary became one of the property's most popular locations for photographs, especially with the view of Stone Mountain in the background. The golf course also received Tree Replacement Units from Stone Mountain Park in recognition of the project's environmental value.

Creating the pollinator sanctuary at Stone Mountain Golf Club was not a difficult process. The only issue encountered during the project was Canada Geese feeding in the sanctuary area, but wire fencing has significantly improved the situation. The golf course was extremely satisfied with the project and plans on expanding the program.



Bees, butterflies and hummingbirds are attracted to the pollinator sanctuary at Stone Mountain Golf Club. The beautiful wildflowers and views of Stone Mountain also make it a popular location for photographs.