

went through a massive yard revitalization. One of the key components was the creation of a wetland at the back of the school. Currently, our school diverts all the rainwater that collects on the roof and channels it through a bioswale to our wetlands. This wetland has a holding tank that stores the rainwater. This water is used to irrigate the school field during dry periods. This wetland has been planted with only native plants. The vast majority of the plants that we used were selected to attract more pollinators. We are excited about increasing the diversity of our plant species in our wetland.

Not only does our school have a wetland, we are currently in the process of developing a community garden. Our school is located in one of the most densely populated areas of Toronto. Most of the students of the school live in an apartment building. As a result, there is a real shortage of green spaces, especially for vegetable gardens. It is projected that this community garden might have up to 50 garden plots. By encouraging more bees, we will definitely help the community vegetable garden.

Our plans to put our mission forth

Becoming a bee school will embolden Valley Park to take action in protecting pollinators. We are planning to educate every single person in our school to understand more about our serviceable project. We want everyone to help with preserving bees. It is important that students understand that bees are not buzzing harmful insects, they are an enormous and vital part of nature.

We have planned a wide range of activities which will physically improve the circumstances for pollinators. These activities will raise major awareness and will guide our staff and students to promote and produce healthy sustainable habitats for bees and other pollinators.

We intend to purchase more native plants and seeds and plant them in our wetland. Some of the plants that we intend to purchase and grow are:

- Black-eyed Susan
- Goldenrod
- Wild bergamot
- Common yarrow
- Milkweed
- Mock Orange
- Blanket Flower
- Blue Columbine
- Coneflower
- BeeBalm
- Swamp Rose
- Canadian Bloodroot

These plants will attract more bees, along with other animals such as the Monarch Butterfly. Not only will this increase bee population, it will also create a larger ecosystem and will make our school and community more environmentally healthy. We would only purchase these plants/seeds from garden centres that promote and sell native species. We would like to make most of our purchases from the garden center at the Evergreen Brickworks. In addition, to planting more native plants we would like to design and build some Bee houses/hotels. These Bee houses/hotels or nest boxes would be designed and built by members of Eco Club.

It is also very important to raise awareness about bees, their importance and the fact that they are endangered. Due to this, **Bee Valley Park** is also planning to host Kahoot trivia games in our cafeteria. The game will be filled with fun facts and ways to help the pollinators. We would like to educate the school/community about the benefit of bees. One of our goals is to educate the school community about the facts and myths related to bees. We would like to dispel the myth that all bees produce honey and that all bees sting. We will be focussing our efforts on the Native bees of Southern Ontario (i.e., Bicoloured Agapostemon).

Celebration plans- International pollinator week

Did you know that out of 1400 bee species in North America, more than 700 of them are under the threat of extinction? This is due to increased pesticide use, which causes bees to lose their habitat. With this being said, many people have no idea that these species are facing major crises. This issue is too quiet and it is crucial for everyone to understand their importance and help end this problem before it is too late. If we succeed in making Valley Park Middle school a bee School we plan to celebrate pollinator week annually. During pollinator week, which is the third week of June, we will raise abundant awareness for the bees and what we can do to protect their habitats. We want to involve as much of the school in this as possible, because everyone should be aware that bees are an important part of our ecosystem and impact our local environment. A very bright display will be put up near our front entrance or cafeteria, and throughout the week we will be announcing engrossing pollinating facts to educate with buzzing music to grab attention. In addition, we will be hosting a Bee Awareness poster contest, and the winner will receive a tempting prize. Furthermore, we will put up many bright and bold posters around our school to help address the situation.

If we succeed in making Valley Park Middle school a Bee School we plan to celebrate pollinator week annually. This will ensure that even after we leave the school, the kids won't forget that our school is a bee School. During pollinator week which is the third week of June, we will raise awareness for the bees and what we can do to protect their habitats. We want to involve as much of the school in this as possible, because everyone should be aware that bees are vital.