

NEWS > AGRICULTURE

# Sustainable Solano plants pollinator garden



Sustainable Solano Environmental Justice Fellows plant a pollinator garden at the Boys and Girls Club of Vacaville on Saturday. (Photo by Rebecca Wasik, The Reporter)

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It was the perfect gardening weather Saturday afternoon, with music playing and teens chatting as they planted a pollinator garden at the Vacaville Neighborhood Boys and Girls Club.

“They are planting primarily California native pollinators, but some are just general pollinators,” said project manager Patrick Murphy with Sustainable Solano. “We are trying to focus on plants that are local, adaptable and going to be able to survive in this climate.”



Sustainable Solano Environmental Justice Fellows plant a pollinator garden at the Boys and Girls Club of Vacaville on Saturday. (Photo by Rebecca Wasik, The Reporter)

As hamburgers were being barbequed nearby for lunch, the students tilled soil, added compost to the soil, planted and watered.

Sustainable Solano project designer Scott Dodson said that he will be setting up an irrigation system on Monday to ensure that the plants will always have enough water during this summer’s scorching conditions. The irrigation system will be controlled by Bluetooth technology so watering can be programmed from anywhere using a smartphone app.

The garden is also shaded by trees to protect the plants from the sun.

After a couple hours of work, the fellowship students took a break to give presentations on environmental issues that are most pressing to them in the city of Vacaville. Sustainable Solano's Youth Environmental Leadership Fellowship program allows high school students interested in learning and leading in environmental justice efforts to become knowledge ambassadors within their communities based on research and hands-on experience.

Jane Sossaman's presentation was on "How Our Native Wildlife Can Benefit from Individual Action." Jane spoke about species that are endangered in Solano County, such as the garter snake.

"One way you can help our wildlife is with backyard habitats," she said. "Food, water, cover, and using sustainable alternatives to pesticides, like vinegar is what you need."

Jane mentioned that she recently had a couple of hummingbird eggs hatch in a nest in her backyard, which inspired her to focus on this topic as her project.

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Jane Sossaman gives her presentation on how wildlife can benefit from individual action on Saturday in Vacaville. (Photo by Rebecca Wasik, The Reporter)

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Next, Rodriguez High student Bella Connerley gave her presentation on "Composting for the Community." She brought a food compost bin that is given to Fairfield residents to give an example of what you will need to do your own composting.

She said beneficial items that can be composted include sawdust, wood chips, pine

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Bella Connerley gives her presentation on composting for the community in Vacaville on Saturday. (Photo by Rebecca Wasik, The Reporter)

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Jillian Guan's presentation focused on "Walkability." She said walking as opposed to driving a car means less pollution and more benefits for our health such as cognitive benefits, better social health and less cardiovascular and metabolic diseases.

Serenity Parker followed with her presentation on "Green Spaces in Urban Areas." She said that nature has a direct impact on humans and our mental and physical health.

Buckingham Collegiate Charter Academy's Madison Millar's presentation focused on air and water quality. Biking, walking, planting trees, reducing the burning of garbage and limiting the use of pesticides are all ways in which humans can improve water and air quality.

Z.C. Maravilla's presentation on "Particulate Pollution" revealed that polluted air is filled with harmful particles that are invisible to the naked eye that can easily enter your body. In her research, she discovered that a Yusuf study done in 2020 determined that 14 percent of cardiovascular disease cases, nine percent of heart attacks and 21 percent of strokes are related to particulate pollution.

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Meanwhile, members of the Boys and Girls Club were over at Trower Park playing flag football. Club CEO Anna Eaton asked the fellows to give their project presentations to the kids once they returned , as she was impressed with all the hard work that went into their research.

Fellows soon got back to work adding the finishing touches of the pollinator garden, which would include wood chips.

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**Rebecca Wasik**

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