

Locals take part in the 'Great Southeast Pollinator Census'

**JANE CABRERA AND
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The Great Southeast Pollinator Census occurs annually in August. Once again Transylvania County Extension Master Gardeners are working to get the word out and are organizing events for the two days of the census: Friday, Aug. 22 and Saturday, Aug. 23. The count is a citizen science project that originated in 2017 with founder Becky Griffin of the University of Georgia. It has grown in both popularity and scope and this year is open to residents of Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama and Florida.

Transylvania County Extension Master Gardeners want to ensure that the county has strong representation on the two days of the census. Jane Cabrera is a certified Extension Master Gardener volunteer and is co-leading this year's EMG "census team" along with Joan VanOrman. "The more I learn about the importance of pollinators, the more committed I am to teaching others and ensur-



Submitted photo

Transylvania Extension Master Gardeners Jane Cabrera and Rodney Holcomb share census Information at Silvermont.

ing I do my part in my own backyard," she said.

The GSePC website (GSePC.org) offers many resources that make it easy and fun to count. People can count in their

own backyard with family, friends or groups. Residents can also count in public gardens and areas within the county. The website has an easy "how to count" resource, and a

counting sheet that identifies by name and picture the various pollinators to be included in the count. They are bumble bees, carpenter bees, honeybees, small bees, wasps, flies,

butterflies/moths and other insects.

Participants in the census are asked to select a pollinator plant to monitor for 15 minutes and track the insects that land on the plant. Each "landing" counts, even if the same pollinator lands multiple times. Participants can provide multiple counts in 15-minute increments. The results can be uploaded to the census website and the "upload" page will be available beginning Aug. 22.

In addition to getting the word out, the Transylvania County EMGs want to make it easy and fun for county residents to participate.

On Friday, Aug. 22, an EMG team will lead a count at the Pollinator Garden at Silvermont from 9-11 a.m. Then, on Saturday, Aug. 23 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. an EMG team will host a pollinator count at the Transylvania Farmers Market/Rice Street Community Garden. This will include a "Kids Day" with crafts, games and story time.

The pollinator census is an event for all ages.

Pollinator-friendly plants

in Transylvania County that are blooming right now include black-eyed susan, purple coneflower, butterfly weed, coral bells, goldenrod and many more. Pollinator lists and even example pollinator gardens can be found at the GSePC website. Research indicates 85% of flowering plants and many global crops rely on animal/insect pollination.

According to the GSePC website, "we are protecting the Southeast's pollinators one count at a time!" The Extension Master Gardeners of Transylvania County plan to have county pollinators well-represented in the count.

To learn more, visit gsepc.org. For local updates, visit the Transylvania County Extension Master Gardeners on Facebook. A video sharing an overview of the census is available at the Transylvania County Cooperative Extension YouTube channel.

For questions, please contact transylvania.ces.ncsu.edu or call (828) 884-3142.

Jane Cabrera and Joan VanOrman are Transylvania County Master Gardeners.