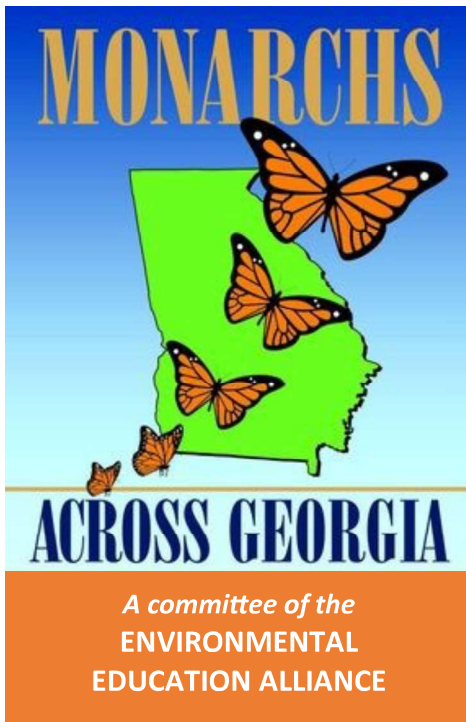


# The Chrysalis

Emerging news from **Monarchs Across Georgia**

*Our mission is to inspire caretakers of the natural environment through monarch and pollinator education*



## June 24: Save the Date for the 2023 MAG Pollinator Symposium

*Theme: Creating Landscapes for Beauty, Biodiversity & Ecological Benefits*

Join Monarchs Across Georgia (MAG) for its 2023 Pollinator Symposium to learn more about what's being done throughout Georgia to conserve, protect, and educate the public about important insect pollinators. This year's symposium will be held Saturday, June 24 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Wimberly Center



*The 2023 MAG Pollinator Symposium will be held at the Wimberly Center for Community Development in Winder.*

for Community Development in Winder.

Registration opens April 1. The \$75 cost includes a catered lunch and the full agenda (some hands-on sessions have small additional fees).

The symposium will kick off with a keynote address from North Carolina State University's Anne Spafford on "Creating Buzzworthy Gardens: Best Landscape Design, Implementation, and Management Strategies for High-Performing Gardens." A professor of landscape design in the horticultural science department, Ms. Spafford's career spans more than 20 years. Although passionate about all subjects she teaches, she has a particular fondness for planting design—excelling in high-performing landscapes: pollinator habitats, rain gardens, therapeutic gardens, and residential gardens. When her schedule permits,

she still likes to take on design projects through her firm, Sprezzaterra Design Studio.

When registering for the symposium, don't miss the chance to pre-order a copy of Ms. Spafford's book, "[Pollinator Gardening for the South: Creating Sustainable Habitats](#)," co-authored by Danesha Seth Carley for \$24. The book is a step-by-step guide to creating beautiful gardens that will welcome beneficial pollinators across the Southern US.

You can also pre-order the educational coloring book, "[Backyard Pollinators: A Partnership with Plants](#)," by Cordelia Norris, Tiffany Miller Russell, and Trudy Smoke Robbins for \$20.

For full details, please visit: <https://www.ealliance.org/2023-pollinator-symposium.html>

*See, "Symposium Sessions," on page 3*

### Upcoming Events

#### [National Science Teacher Association Conference](#)

March 22-25, 2023  
Atlanta, GA

#### [MAG Pollinator Symposium](#)

*Creating Landscapes for Beauty, Biodiversity & Ecological Benefits*  
June 24, 2023  
Wimberly Center for Community Development, Winder, GA

#### [National Pollinator Week](#)

June 19-25, 2023

#### [National Moth Week](#)

July 22-30, 2023

#### [Great Southeast Pollinator Census](#)

August 18-19, 2023

# Great Pollinator Census expands to Carolinas

*Save the Dates: The 2023 census will take place August 18-19*

By Becky Griffin

As interest in supporting pollinators has grown across the region, two of Georgia's neighboring states have signed on to participate in the pollinator census and, as of December 1, 2022, the [Great Georgia Pollinator Census](#) will be known as the Great Southeast Pollinator Census.

In 2019, [University of Georgia Cooperative Extension](#) launched the Great Georgia Pollinator Census as a citizen science research project and invited all Georgians to come together for two days in August to document pollinator populations. Since then, the annual project has encouraged the creation of sustainable pollinator habitats and inspired many to learn about the many types of pollinators.

Since the program began, participation has nearly doubled, growing from 4,698 participants in 2019 to 8,671 in 2022 as community groups, public gardens, UGA Extension offices, and other partners enthusiastically helped Georgia's pollinators, "one count at a time."

The program also offers a no-cost STEM program for educators, with teaching resources in English and Spanish available through the [program's website](#), including lesson plans, presentations, and an insect ID guide. Schools have used the project to teach science, technology, engineering, and math, and with the [educator resources](#), the project is easy to use in the classroom.

In 2022, South Carolina joined the census through the efforts of [Amy Dabbs](#), statewide school and community gardening coordinator for Clemson Cooperative Extension at Clem-



*Students at Colham Ferry Elementary School in Watkinsville participate in Georgia's inaugural pollinator census in 2019.*

son University. Participants from South Carolina uploaded counts from 17 counties.

This year, North Carolina will join the census, through the efforts of [Alyssa McKim](#), community garden coordinator with Extension at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University. McKim has the support of colleagues from North Carolina State University and the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission.

With the name change, the census will take on a broader outreach mission while generating more data for researchers. Resources will be created for the larger audience, ensuring that participants across all three states will have the materials they need to successfully be part of the project.

Visit [ggapc.org](http://ggapc.org) to learn more about how to participate in the Great Southeast Pollinator Census in 2023 and beyond.



# Symposium Sessions

Continued from page 1

Concurrent Sessions 10:30 to 11:30 a.m.

Topic	Presenter	Seat Limit	Cost
Cooking with Herbs Pollinator-style	Chef Troy Luke	20	\$5
The Georgia Green Landscape Stewards Program	Jessica Warren	N/A	N/A
Mimicry and Mayhem: Pollination and other vital ecosystem services provided by hover flies and overlooked Diptera	Dr. C. Scott Clem	N/A	N/A
The Great Southeast Pollinator Census	Becky Griffin	20	N/A
Creating Native Bee Nesting Boxes	Alicia Holloway	20	\$5

Concurrent Sessions 12:45 to 1:45 a.m.

Topic	Presenter	Seat Limit	Cost
Pollinator Ambassador Program	Kasey Bozeman	N/A	N/A
Connect to Protect & Pollinator Plants of the Year Programs	Heather Alley	N/A	N/A
MAG Pollinator Habitat Certification	Trecia Neal	20	N/A
Native Plant Propagation	Dr. Bodie Pennisi	20	\$5

## Pollinator Habitat Certification

Do you enjoy seeing caterpillars on their host plants, how about searching for hidden chrysalides, or maybe just watching butterflies and hummingbirds flit from flower to flower?

Does your schoolyard, workplace, or backyard have bushes, trees, and/or flowers that provide host plants, nectar, and protection for pollinators? Is there a source of water or puddling areas for thirsty butterflies? Are there any places for them to roost at night?

If you answered yes to many or most of these questions, consider registering your habitat with MAG's [Pollinator Habitat Program](#). No garden is too big or too small! Certified pollinator habitats that have been maintained for a minimum of three years from their certification date are eligible to be nominated for our [Pollinator Habitat Award](#).

Congratulations to MAG's latest certified garden: Catherine Lovett in Savannah, GA.



## Call for Committee Volunteers

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED in volunteering with the Monarchs Across Georgia (MAG) committee, please email [mag@eealliance.org](mailto:mag@eealliance.org) and let us know what volunteer opportunities interest you.

**Here are some of the many ways we could use your help:**

- Write newsletter articles
- Become a MAG workshop facilitator and co-facilitate workshops
- Review grant applications
- Become part of our speakers bureau
- Post information on our web pages
- Gather news for our Facebook page
- Help with an event (such as a children's craft or answering questions)
- Become an active committee member and coordinate or work on a project, such as...
  - Grant administration
  - Newsletter editor
  - Symbolic Migration
  - Mexico Book Project
  - Plant sales
  - Pollinator habitat certification
  - Volunteer coordination
  - E-blast/email list

## RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

### ***The Hidden Life of Trees: What they feel, how they communicate — Discoveries from a secret world***

In this fascinating read, author Peter Wohlleben shares his deep love of trees and forests, and enlightens us on how trees communicate, feel, and live in social networks. He describes how trees are like human families, with tree parents living together with their children, communicating with them, and supporting them as they grow.

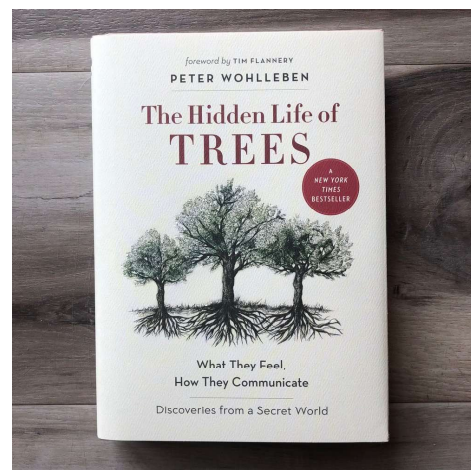
He also explains that trees share nutrients with those who are sick or struggling, and even warn each other of impending dangers.

Wohlleben writes about the connections that exist below the ground thanks to fungi known as mycelium, which were discovered by forest scientist Suzanne Simard in western North America. These

connections were given the name “wood-wide-web.” Wohlleben suggests that the wood-wide-web could be a way that trees transmit signals between one another, exchanging news about insects, drought, or other dangers.

He suggests that trees should be seen as parts of a community in which individuals are aware of their neighbors, communicate with them, relate to them and help each other. The book includes Wohlleben’s explanations and incredible visualizations of the ways in which trees communicate and support each other.

Wohlleben reminds readers that forests exist in a state of continuous change, even if it is



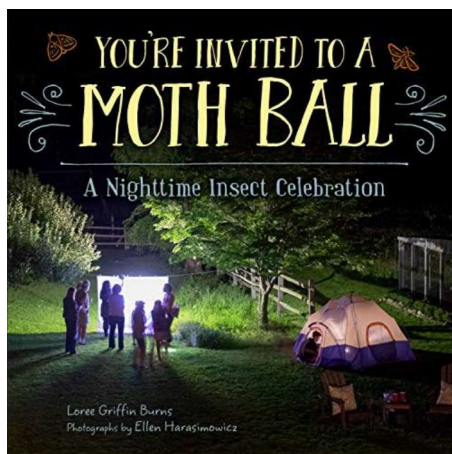
hard for us to see because their timescale is so much slower than ours. Readers are sure to be awe-inspired by his descriptions of the remarkable processes of life, death, and regeneration that he has observed in the woodland.

---

### ***You're Invited to a Moth Ball: A nighttime insect celebration***

Prepare for a summer of sleepover parties, or rather moth balls for young citizen scientists to study moths at night. Author Loree Griffin Burns gives us the instructions in her book, which is fully illustrated and interspersed with many large, appealing photographs taken by Ellen Harasimowicz.

This 40-page book shows children how to plan and carry out the event, aided by a glossary, resources, and helpful notes from the author and photographer. Readers are introduced to the anatomy of moths and how they differ from butterflies, as well as the moth life cycle.



Children are sure to love preparing nectar from mashed banana and brown sugar to lure the nocturnal insects. The next step is to brush the nectar on trees and fences, and

then set up a moth viewing area using a white sheet and a light source. When the insects arrive, the ball attendees can observe which moths are attracted to the light and which go on to feed on the nectar.

The author and photographer/illustrator have made this an uncomplicated, fun and engaging instructional guidebook for an enjoyable event that is likely to be a hit summer party every year!

Suggested Grade Level: K-3  
Reading Age: 5-8 years

# 2022-23 Symbolic Monarch Migration Update

By Susan Meyers



*Clockwise from top left: 1. Students view the Ambassador map; 2. A student holds his Ambassador; 3. Estela Romero hands Susan Meyers the letters from the students in Mexico; 4. Students in Mexico participate in an environmental lesson that uses butterfly specimens.*

Estela Romero, coordinator of the Symbolic Migration project, completed her school visits in the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve on February 12, 2023. More than 1,000 Ambassadors were delivered to more than 30 schools. To find out where your Ambassador landed, use the SEARCH function at the top right of [Symbolic Migration](#). You can also read the story (available in English and Spanish) and see photos from each visit on the website.

This collection of Ambassadors originated from 40 U.S. states, the District of Columbia, four Canadian provinces, and one homeschool in Mumbai, India. More than 9,800 youth participated in the migration by creating life-sized butterflies.

Letters written by students in Mexico as part of the environmental lesson facilitated by Ms. Romero are now here in Georgia. Volunteers will be filling the Spring return envelopes with life-sized butterflies and letters to be sent back to participating families, groups, and classrooms. We hope to have everything mailed by the end of March... so watch your mailboxes!

Remember, as with the actual monarch migration, not every life-sized butterfly makes the return trip. We do our best to return the same number of butterflies that you sent, but it is not always possible.

Thank you again for your patience and support this season! We hope

that you will join us again for the next season. Details will be posted in early August with a postmark deadline of October 20, 2023.

*The Symbolic Migration project is a partnership project between Journey North, a program of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Arboretum, and Monarchs Across Georgia, a committee of The Environmental Education Alliance of Georgia, a 501(c)(3) organization.*

*[Journey North](#) manages the interactive Symbolic Migration Participant Maps and hosts all educational materials on the Journey North website.*

*[Monarchs Across Georgia](#) administers the program and is responsible for all fundraising.*

# Spotlights... for your pollinator garden

## Polyphemus Moth (*Antheraea polyphemus*)



Top left: Adult male polyphemus moth, *Antheraea polyphemus* (Cramer) (dorsal view). Above: Fifth instar larva of polyphemus moth. Middle: Cocoon of polyphemus moth with emergence hole. Below: Frass (fecal pellets) of larva of polyphemus moth. All photographs by [Donald W. Hall](#), University of Florida.

The Polyphemus moth is named for the cyclops Polyphemus from Greek mythology, who had one large eye in his head. The moth has the normal two compound eyes on its head, but it has striking eyespots on its two hindwings, a common adaptation found across many species to deflect predators.

With a wingspan of 4-6 inches, this member of the silk moth family is quite noticeable. The adult moths only live for about a week, just long enough to mate and lay eggs.

In addition to sassafras, this moth has several other host trees in Georgia, including oak, willow, maple, and birch. Although the fat, bright green caterpillar is generally

munching away high in the treetop, you may find its distinctive frass (poop) on the ground below.

The caterpillar creates a brown silk cocoon, usually wrapped up in the leaves of its host plant. These may stay attached to the tree or drop down to the leaf litter, yet another reason to leave your leaves in the fall.



## Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*)

Sassafras (*Sassafras albidum*) is a small tree native to the eastern U.S. It can be found in every Georgia county and has a rich cultural history based on its medicinal and nutritive properties.



Sassafras trees have three different leaf shapes – a generic leaf-shape, a mitten, and a glove. Photo: [Jack Merridew, cc-by-sa 3.0](#)

One folk tale explaining its mitten-shaped leaves goes like this:

*One cold winter, a husband asks his wife for something to keep his hands warm. She knits him a mitten without a thumb. He is grateful but wonders if she could make something that would allow him use of his thumbs. She obliges and makes a mitten with a thumb, and again he is grateful but realizes he really needs something that will allow him to use his fingers and thumb. She knits a mitten, this time with two thumbs. They have a laugh at the silly mitten and finally she knits some gloves that fit perfectly. They throw all the failed mittens out the window and the next spring a new tree grows up from where the mittens were tossed, with leaves shaped like each one of the mitten creations.*

See, "Spotlights," on page 8

# Changing the Law of the Land: Dispelling myths about wildlife gardens

By Nancy Lawson

The delegate seemed ready to pick a fight, already having mocked a proposed plastic bag ban and other pro-environment bills on the day's agenda. As I finished my testimony in support of wildlife-friendly plantings, I steeled myself for a heated debate.

But on that gray afternoon in February 2020, even the crankiest person in the committee hearing room couldn't deny the bees and the butterflies. "Who wouldn't support pollinator gardens?" he asked, portending near-unanimous approval by the Maryland General Assembly. Though later stalled by pandemic-related delays, the "low-impact landscaping" bill—which requires homeowner associations to allow habitat gardens and prohibits them from mandating turfgrass—sailed through the legislature in 2021 and became law Oct. 1.

The positive reception was a welcome surprise, especially given the negative undertones of the case that started it all. For more than three years, HOA-hired attorneys had demanded that my sister and brother-in-law, Janet and Jeff Crouch, destroy their vibrant flower beds in Columbia, Md., in favor of lawn. In threatening letters, they wrote that pesticide-free, bird-friendly gardens had no place in planned communities. They disparaged the Crouches' "environmentally sensitive agenda" and spent \$100,000 in homeowner fees trying to dismantle it.

The HOA lost more than money and the case itself, which rested feebly on a single neighbor's complaint.

Their bullying ways also inspired two state delegates to introduce the bill, which includes helping wildlife as one of its goals. While public agencies increasingly support habitat gardens, many HOAs cling to antiquated notions, recycling baseless arguments to justify collecting fines. As my sister battled each outlandish demand, we learned how flimsy arguments against natural landscaping can be.

For others fighting the good fight on behalf of habitat gardens, I've summarized our responses to common myths.

**Myth:** *Native plants and wildlife gardens attract "pests," flooding the neighborhood with mosquitoes, mice, bats, snakes, wasps, squirrels, deer and opossums.*

**Reality:** Many of these misunderstood animals already live in edge habitats of suburbia, where turf meets treeline. Roadside oaks planted by developers in my sister's community, along with adjacent public woodlands, offer habitat no matter what else is planted.

Wildlife gardens add ecological balance, offering what retired HSUS wildlife biologist John Hadidian called "a critical community service" in the expert testimony he provided for my sister's case. Native plantings not only provide food, shelter and nesting sites, they hold ground through deep roots and absorb strong rains, alleviating poor drainage caused by patchy lawns that invite mosquitoes to breed. Animals keep one another in check:

Dragonflies and bats eat mosquitoes; opossums and birds eat ticks. Snakes prey on mice; birds, wasps and spiders provide natural insect control. Far from being "pests," wild residents who visit gardens are part of deeply interconnected communities.

**Myth:** *Lawns are the ideal standard, and wildlife gardens decrease property values.*

**Reality:** "When you just see bare flat turf and nothing to create a transition between yard or pavement and home, it just doesn't show as well," says Kristi Neidhardt, a top-selling real estate agent who also provided expert testimony in my sister's case. By contrast, Neidhardt has seen how positively potential buyers react to pollinator gardens. "It's just such a tremendous asset," she says, "not a deterrent."

As more homeowners discover that the great American lawn is a water-sucking, polluting, wildlife-starving sham, they're seeking sustainable alternatives. That's especially true in drought-prone states like California, one of the first to encourage environmentally friendly landscaping, and in areas like Maryland's Chesapeake Bay watershed, where native plant buffers mitigate flooding.

**Myth:** *Native plants are unruly or wild.*

**Reality:** Native plants come in many shapes, colors and sizes and have hit

*See, "Myths," on page 8*

## Spotlight

*Continued from page 6*

Keep an eye out in early spring for flowering sassafras. Its small yellow flowers bloom in clusters just before the tree leaves out. They attract small bees and flies as pollinators and serve as a host not just for the polyphemus moth, but also for spicebush swallowtail butterflies and other moths in the silk moth family.

Sassafras has a long history of use as a food additive (e.g., in root beer and gumbo) and as a natural remedy for fevers, diarrhea, and rheumatism. However, sassafras contains safrole, a volatile oil, which has been classified as a likely carcinogen and banned as a food additive by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

It is this oil that gives sassafras its distinctive spicy aroma. Perhaps it is



*Sassafras blooming in early March.  
Photo: Kyla Sankara*

---

this intriguing scent that attracts the female Polyphemus moth (*Antheraea polyphemus*) to lay her flat, brown eggs on its leaves.

### Sources:

<https://growwithmecoop.com/2016/11/29/sassafras-in-the-forest/>

<https://gnps.org/plant/sassafras-sassafras-albidum/>

<https://www.mskcc.org/cancer-care/integrative-medicine/herbs/sassafras>

<https://www.backyardecology.net/sassafras-a-beautiful-native-tree-used-by-wildlife-and-humans/>

[https://entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/MISC/MOTHS/polyphemus\\_moth.htm](https://entnemdept.ufl.edu/creatures/MISC/MOTHS/polyphemus_moth.htm)

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antheraea\\_polyphemus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antheraea_polyphemus)

<https://doi.org/10.1098/rsos.150155>

---

## Myths

*Continued from page 7*

the mainstream in American horticulture. They can be incorporated into any design, from a cottage gardening style to a Japanese garden aesthetic. They often look like they've always belonged—and that's no coincidence, given that they've evolved to grow well in local soils and weather conditions, unlike the imported species typically used in lawns that require pesticides and supplemental watering to thrive.

**Myth:** *Pollinator gardens are dangerous because bees can sting.*

**Reality:** This pervasive misunderstanding is based on the mistaken view that honeybees represent all bee species. But the

unique hive lifestyle of honeybees, domesticated animals introduced from Europe centuries ago to pollinate crops, triggers their protective instinct when near the nest.

Most of North America's 4,000 native bee species are solitary, creating single nests of just a few eggs in the ground or in cavities, and they generally don't sting unless they're highly provoked. These gentle, often miniscule bees are the ones most likely to visit gardens.

Many people said my sister would never win. But there is strength in the truth; the ethical and scientific

merits of planting for wildlife are indisputable. There is also strength in numbers. If you find yourself in a similar situation, talk to neighbors, advocacy organizations and elected officials. Read your HOA bylaws carefully; they often don't match the "violations" cited. You never know—you might save your own wildlife garden and change the law of the land at the same time.

*Nancy Lawson is the author of The Humane Gardener and Wildscape.*

*Reprinted with permission from [All Animals magazine](#), a publication of the Humane Society of the United States.*