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ECO-LOGIC

The Official Newsletter of the Tri-City Ecology Center



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Spring is Springing!

After the March and even April rains and showers, the bees have announced that it is time to swarm! Last week on a single day there were more than 23 swarm calls during the day and the swarms are now continuing with the arrival of sun and blooming flowers. Oh, happy bees! Here's a rerun story of California bees and bee supporters.

HONEYBEES VERSUS NATURAL BEES

“To be or not to be” has been the subject of many recent articles on raising honeybees. The concern is that there are too many honeybees (as opposed to we are losing all of them!) and they threaten native bees that are unable to compete for the nectar and pollen. Gareth John a “natural beekeeper” in England laments the impact of industrial and intensive apiary husbandry and the emergence of diseases such as the Varroa mite. He describes the “Four Ps” – parasites, pathogens, poor nutrition and pesticides that have changed the balance of species along with a growing agro- industry that uses chemicals, queen transfers, and any effort that increases honey production. Fortunately, for us European bee enthusiasts (our honey bees were introduced around 1620 from Europe) there may be a way to balance the needs of native bees and *Apis Mellifera*. Fremont Beek Phil Stob offers it here with a different “Four Ps”



4PS AND LEAF IT BEE

BY PHIL STOB

We would all do well to amend our garden to provide for the 4 P's Pollinators (native and nonnative), Predators, Parasitoids, (beneficial insects), and Passerines (insectivorous songbirds).

Beneficial predatory and parasitic insects and insect-eating birds can exert a huge control on detrimental insects such as aphids, thrips, mites, scale, mealy bugs, and caterpillars. Common members of the 4 P's include the following:

Pollinators - Honey bees, bumble bees, native solitary bees, syrphid flies, tachinid flies, and small non stinging predatory wasps.

Predators - Minute pirate bugs, assassin bugs, soldier beetles, tachinid flies, ladybugs, and lacewings. Predators chew pests with mandibles or pierce them with tubelike mouth parts and suck out their innards, - Fun stuff.

Parasitoids - Syrphid flies, tachinid flies, and many wasp species. Parasitoids typically lay their eggs nearby, on, or in pests. In the larval stage, the parasite kills the host pest by slowly eating first the nonessential organs, then the essential organs. Some species serve variously as both predators (adult phase) and parasitoids (larval stage)

Passerines - Common insectivorous garden songbirds include Bushtits, Chickadees, most Warblers, Vireos, Hermit Thrushes, Fly Catchers, Wrens, Bluebirds, and many more. These birds are voracious leaf and stem cleaners. It's great fun to watch a flock of 20-30 Bushtits or Chickadees swoop down into the garden and dance around devouring aphid eggs, spiders, and other crawling bugs before they leave in flock again for the next garden spot.

So we need to plant with all of this in mind to build a good garden, and a piece of natural reserve in suburbia. You can attract beneficials to your yard and prevent harmful pest by planting a variety of plants and giving them refuge for the winter.

Part of that refuge concept is the idea of Leaf it Be.

The National Wildlife Federation has designated October (now November) as Leave the Leaves Month.

Within that fallen leaf layer is an entire ecosystem, home to all sorts of animals and insects, including invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians, and pollinators. Many species of moths and butterflies, for instance, rely on the fallen leaf layer to complete their life cycle, as more than 90 percent of moth species attach themselves to leaves and spend the winter in cocoons buried among the foliage. Those moths and butterflies, in turn, are a critical food supply for many birds next spring.

When we are overly zealous about getting rid of every single leaf in our neighborhoods, we literally wipe out entire populations of these pollinators. These species can live right alongside us if we just give them some habitat.

So, as you do your fall trimming of your garden, you would do well to chop it and drop it. Let those trimmings be your winter mulch. Just cut the stems into 6" bits and let them compost right there. Most of those tall annual plants have pithy, or hollow stems that many native bees and bugs will find as a great home for their next generation. Those stems may not get occupied this fall, but may be an ideal home in the spring or summer next year as they slowly degrade, and the seasonal bees start looking for homes for their next generation. If you rake or blow the leaves off the walkways and lawn, pile them into your garden beds to mulch your plants. The more homes you make for the bugs and the bees, the more you add to the diversity of your ecosystem.

Even if it's just your one yard in your suburban block. It's a start and a toehold for some threatened species. Of course, a well mulched bed also has fewer weeds, and the weeds that do show up are easy to spot and pull out. It also has the benefit of holding soil, reducing soil temperature through the year, and adding nutrients to the soil.

Life begins in the garden.

Thanks to Orvin Martin for the 4P's, and the National Wildlife Federation for the Leave the Leaves concept.

Springtime Heroes!

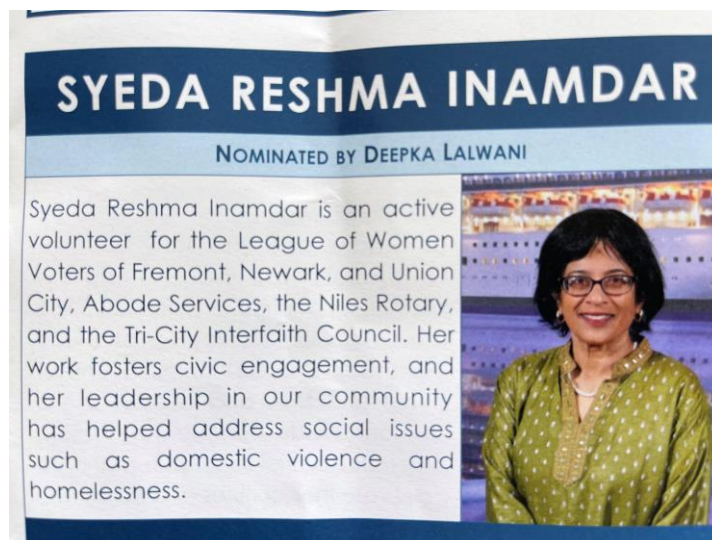
On Saturday, April 13, special recognition was given to 24 Unsung Heroes of our southern Bay Area at the San Jose City College Milpitas extension auditorium. State Assemblymember Alex Lee handed the awards and included were 3 special women who have worked tirelessly to make our world better and the environment healthier. Right from the Board of Tri City Ecology was Lynn Miller, founder of Urban Forest Friends, who has done so much for the urban canopy (see article ahead).



Also honored and noted as the President and energy of volunteer efforts of so many was Elain Owyang of Local Ecology and Agriculture Leaf (www.fremontleaf.org). LEAF was recognized for environmental education, regenerative agriculture, organic farming and community building, and Elaine has been spearheading the work on the Urban Garden as well as the Leaf Center at CNHP for many years.



And Reshma Inamdar, who wears many hats, was recognized for her leadership for civic engagement, which includes her work on REACT, the Niles Rotary Environmental Action Team. Reshma also works with the League of Women Voters of Fremont, Newark and Union City.



There is much to be proud of for the efforts for environment and the event was well attended. Helena and Matthew Sylvester were also recognized as unsung heroes for their work operating a farm in Sunol – a community supported agricultural program that works with youth and Sunol residents.

UFF – Urban Forest Friends

Speaking of UFF, the sun finally came out on Saturday the 14th for the Cabrillo tree-planting event. It was very successful, and 14 trees were planted in a neighborhood park that lacked trees. Now, thanks to a contingent of volunteers there was training and a lot of tree planting. The City of Fremont provided good support and attendance by the City Council. Assemblymember Alex Lee helped kick off the event, and all had a good time. Thanks, Lynn Miller and all the organizers for a great way to start Spring!



Barn Owl keeping an eye on the event



Up Coming Events

April 2024

Fremont Earth Day Fair



Don't forget to celebrate [Earth Day](#) on Saturday, April 20! The City will be hosting its annual [Earth Day Fair](#) from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Downtown Event Center located at 3500 Capitol Avenue. Enjoy a family-friendly afternoon filled with activities. Come learn everything there is to know about clean water, recycling, lowering your energy usage at home, and more. See you there!

SAVE THE DATE!

The Tri-City Ecology Center's annual Lemonade Stand Fundraiser will once more be held at the Fremont

Festival of the Arts over the weekend of August 3rd & 4th, 2024. Two-hour shifts are available from

10:00am through 6:00pm on both Saturday and Sunday. If you're going to be at the Festival anyway,

why not volunteer at the booth and be eligible for all the free lemonade you can drink during your shift!

Please contact Mr. Lemonade Man himself at: riverjedi@gmail.com



BECOME A MEMBER

WANT TO JOIN TCEC?

If you want to become a member please click [HERE](#) to fill out this form and mail a check to 3375 Country Drive, Fremont, CA 94536. To know more about TCEC please visit our website at <http://www.tricityecology.org> Board meets on the first Thursday of each month on Zoom due to Covid-1. Please call to verify. If you wish to speak on a subject, please call 510.793.6222 or 510.790.1685. If you have any suggestions or want to contact us, please fill out [THIS](#) form.

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