

Bee/Pollinator- Long Narrative

I do appreciate any and all input on how CtK members understand the vision of the Bee/Pollinator Ministry. I know how I, and other members of the Ministry see it. The feedback has been positive, with people understanding that bees and pollinators are extremely important to our existence, need our help and support, that we can lower our carbon footprint, and that we will become educators and an example for others to follow. All as we become better stewards of our property and surrounding wildlife. That is the purpose of the Ministry, serving God by serving bees and pollinators.

It was great to see how the council, the congregation, Endowment and the Ministry have rallied to support these pollinators! Stan Stine said that because of their devastating losses of habitat, we really need to remove as much grass as possible in all of our homes and plant with a purpose with native plants! God has graced us with this property and it is one of the new areas that CtK can continue to unify for one goal under Christ.

We had our first ministry meeting Wednesday 7/01/20, discussed Phase 1- NE corner of CtK property, approximately 17,000 square feet. Per professional recommendation, we will plow, disc and till(?) the area. Believe that is closer to our goals, rather than putting on Round Up. Our grass is very thick, so we cannot over seed it, as the grass will crowd out the seeds that we would be planting. It is also too large of an area to smother with visqueen. The cost here is minimal with Rich Bissel saying that it should only be \$100 for his fuel! The area will have 4-6 mower widths of grass around it that provides a border, like a very large garden! Again, a professional recommendation. Fertilizer will probably also be applied after planting and after the seeds are pushed into the ground. Probably with towed straw bales! LOL

Will plant this September, mainly flower seeds, but only native plant varieties. May plant some grasses, but we have been told that they like to take over. This area will be planted with flowers set to bloom spring to fall, and of different colors. The goal is to provide continuous flowering plants for many varieties of bees/pollinators. It is best to plant in the fall as the plants will continue to establish themselves during the fall, winter and then into the spring. Many lawns are done in fall. Note: The Bissels owned this property and Rich last planted soybeans on it in 1966!

There will also be an Education Planting that will be located in the front of the church, in the grass, in the circle. We will plant example plants of every type of forb or grass that is planted in back, with some sort of signage telling what it is. This was a great recommendation from Dave at OPN! Jake came up with a stellar way to prepare the site and we will have to figure out how to provide the informational signage for each plant. This is for CtK members, children, neighbors, interested parties, etc. so that anybody can understand what is planted at the CtK Bee/Pollinator site. Glenn suggested that we also place signage by the planted north area, and after reflection, this sounds like a good idea.

There will be additional signage, that Ministry members are working to nail down exactly what it will say/look like, to recognize that it is a "Bee/Pollinator Habitat In Progress." Additional signage will recognize the CtK Endowment financial support. Paul had a good idea and suggested that we also recognize the Bissel family history somehow.

Please also understand that this will be a "Habitat in Progress!" It is very similar to a seeded lawn, or a farmer's field. When a lawn or a farm field is prepped, it may not be as attractive as it will be later. Seeds will begin to sprout, shoots will push skyward, stalks will lengthen and grow, and eventually it will fill in. In the case of a lawn it takes a few years, sometimes with reseeding, to fully fill in. Similarly, the Bee/Pollinator areas will take time to grow and mature.

Kate Chapel, of The Tinkers Creek Watershed Partnership, has agreed to walk the site with us multiple times a year to help assess how the planting is progressing. Dave Chappel, of Ohio Prairie Nursery, will also continue to be directly involved in monitoring and providing guidance.

Recently Dave Schiopita brought to my attention that we need to make sure that we leave areas for other CtK outdoor activities! Great catch! That is one of the Covid problems! Not meeting and talking with each other! Please reach out to me with any thoughts that you have about these areas not to plant! We do know: grass borders around all planted areas, parking, sidewalks, and main building; access to the fire pit, 3ea.- sheds, fire hydrant, areas for outdoor summer Bible Study, and a clear view of the front sign. What else?

I am so enamored with pollinator planting that I need to be reminded of other CtK needs! LOL

There still is a desire to try to get silky, whorled, and common milkweed plants. We reached out to a place that provides them free, but so many others had already requested them that we were put on a waiting list. Any help here is appreciated!

Dave S. also suggested that we look into a blog on the CtK site, a Zoom question and answer time, and possibly adding attachments to the CtK site. I think we can do these all, just please be patient!!

I do apologize for not keeping everybody more informed sooner on the exact direction that the ministry has been going. A big part of my lapse is because of the challenges of Covid, part of it was that we did not get the grant until the end of May, Thank you Endowment!, and part is other things going on in my life. It has not been because I do not care to share, no, quite the opposite. I do appreciate your grace and understanding in this.

I know that your Bee/Pollinator Ministry members are excited to be moving forward to plant and see results! They truly care, are passionate, and want this to be as purposeful and successful as possible!! They are Paul Buckholtz, Chris Driver, Glenn Fasnacht, Pam and Wiley Wolfe, and myself. All are welcome!!

Our site can also be a place for others to get involved. Boy/Girl Scouts, Garden Clubs, The Tinkers Creek Watershed Partnership, other ministries, individuals, etc. Bee/bird/bat houses, maybe a thoughtful walkway, and?

Future Ministry Meetings will probably be at 5PM and will be posted so that anybody can attend them.

Please reach out to me with any thoughts, concerns, etc. so that the Bee/Pollinator Ministry can be informed and discuss whatever needs to be talked about.

As always, in Christ, Bob