

## PROJECT WILDLIFE: BISBEE

Seven months ago we had this great idea: Let's plant native in Bisbee!! We had a reason for doing so ... as well as a goal.

The reason is a well-documented fact: birds, bees, bats and other pollinators are under stress. The native plants they grew up with and rely on for their food are becoming rare, partly because we human beings are destroying their habitat through increased development, partly because the plants they grew up with are not the plants most nurseries are selling.

Our goal is that, by September 2023, as a result of using the native plants small creatures need throughout the City, Bisbee will be designated a Community Wildlife Habitat by the National Wildlife Federation! When the Bisbee Bloomers hold their Annual Garden Tour early in September, the Tour will feature many gardens individually registered as wildlife habitats and since the Tour will coincide with celebrations surrounding the 100th Anniversary of the Arizona Wildlife Federation's existence, we expect it to attract added attention and enthusiasm.

We think this is a goal too big to miss! So, in addition to the city parks, schools, churches and individual gardens already registered (or in the process of registering), we are asking 50 more individual property owners to garden mindfully and register their gardens with the NWF as soon as possible. To garden mindfully means that we use mainly native plants to provide our small wildlife with food and shelter, we provide water, and we avoid the use of harmful chemicals and pesticides.

That's it! Easy!

To help us get this far, we have had wonderful help and support from the community and we would like to thank them some of them here: THE BISBEE OBSERVER (which has printed our columns monthly and will continue to print them through next year); THE CITY OF BISBEE (the Council voiced their unanimous support for the project at a recent council meeting and awarded us a grant to get us going); and ACE HARDWARE (who next year will bring native plants over from their Sierra Vista location to sell to gardeners in Bisbee). We have also received support from THE BISBEE BLOOMERS, THE BISBEE SATURDAY MARKET and THE BISBEE SCIENCE AND RESEARCH CENTER. Last, but definitely not least, both the NATIONAL WILDLIFE FEDERATION and the ARIZONA WILDLIFE FEDERATION are continuing to help us by providing advice and encouragement, furnishing us with materials, magazines and handouts - and cheering us on as we approach final registration.

(Excitingly, we have recently been talking to two other local organizations. Both have expressed keen interest in our project and are offering significant help. We hope to have more news on this next month.)

What we need now is more individual gardeners to register their gardens as residential wildlife habitats. You can do this in two ways: contact [www.nwf.org/certify](http://www.nwf.org/certify) and sign up online, or contact us via [plantnativeinbisbee@gmail.com](mailto:plantnativeinbisbee@gmail.com) to ask for more information.

And thank you, Bisbee!!