

NEWS

UNCA community wary of declining honeybee populations

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Contributor

The UNC Asheville community joins the fight to help local pollinators by establishing pollinator meadows on campus. This is possible with funding provided by Burt's Bees Greater Good Foundation, the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Partnership and Bee City USA, according to university officials.

"There are a lot of parasites and pathogens that affect bees and being affected by one makes you more vulnerable to others," said Rebecca Hale, assistant professor of biology at UNCA and Weaverville resident.

According to the USDA, the total number of managed honeybee colonies

dropped by half since the 1940s with numbers now below 2.5 million.

The pollinators' populations are under duress from a phenomenon known as colony collapse disorder, in addition to environmental stresses such as mites, pathogens, fungi, neonicotinoid pesticides and more, according to the USDA.

Colony collapse disorder occurs when most worker bees in a colony disappear and leave behind a queen, plenty of food and a few nurse bees, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

David Clarke, professor of biology at UNCA and Asheville resident, said there is no one specific cause for the declining honeybee population, but multiple causes.

"Certainly any of those things, the parasites and neonicotinoids," Clarke said, "would need addressing if you want to save the honeybees."

Bee pollination is responsible for more than \$15 billion in crops each year, according to the USDA.

"Honeybees are the biggest pollinator of crops that need to be pollinated," said Hale, a practicing beekeeper since 2008. "Anything that produces a nice, yummy fruit needs to be pollinated, and the way we do our agriculture nationally doesn't allow natural pollinators to be as abundant around those crop fields. We rely on honeybees to do a lot of that."

Bees pollinate various crops, some of which include apples, avocados,



peaches, broccoli, onions, pumpkin and more, according to the National Resources Defense Council.

Many people are unaware of the importance of honeybees and the dangers they face. Kelly Norris, a sophomore environmental studies student at UNCA, said the decline of honeybee populations is alarming.

"I think the honeybees are ultimately important in a lot of aspects of life," Norris said. "Pollinators are critically important to our well-being. They're a part of our environment just as much as

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Photos by Kelly Norris - Contributor



Student inventors work to prevent sexual assault

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Two students' idea to create a technology capable of preventing sexual assault is finally coming to fruition.

Madison Eddings, cellular and molecular biology student, and Ben Eisdorfer, management student, invented a wearable bracelet called Pro(tech)t. Using cellular-based data, the bracelet alerts campus police, at the touch of a button, in the event someone feels endangered.

"We've both always had a passion about rape culture and sexual assault in general, as well as the issues it causes," Eddings said. "Sexual assault is such a big issue and it has so

many pieces to it. It really does come down to the need for a cultural change for it to be lasting. It also needs an immediate fix and solution."

The UNC Asheville students said they thought of the idea in a social entrepreneurship class.

"We were thinking, 'What does a potential victim need in that moment when things become not okay? What would be the easiest way for someone to alert someone else?'" Eddings said.

After winning UNC's 2015 Social Entrepreneurship Conference in February, the duo raised around \$20,000 to manufacture their product, Eddings said. This amount includes anonymous donations, personal funds and the \$3,000 confer-

ence prize.

Eisdorfer said a provisional patent was issued for the product, the name is now trademarked and the students obtained Limited Liability Company authorization.

The duo said they chose their favorite company, Eventys, to aid with developing and manufacturing Pro(tech)t.

The company, based in Charlotte, is a full-service product development firm that takes pride in their quality products, according to the Eventys website. With over a decade of experience in its industry, Eventys has worked with companies like Colgate, Clorox, Rubbermaid, Mattel and Coca-Cola.

"It's so frustrating sometimes because it does feel like a slow



Photo contributed by Madison Eddings
Ben Eisdorfer and Madison Eddings pose with Philip Gary.