

# **MGs at the 2022 Fall Harvest Festival**

Sept. 17 and 18 brought together 14 interns from the Class of 2022 who created displays about composting, cut flowers, bees as pollinators, container gardening, and the spotted lanternfly. These photos represent the displays, the participants, and the MGs from previous classes who assisted.



**The compost team:** Sophia Issa, Dylan Grana, and Scott Japko.



**Container gardening:** Lynne Proskow, Lori Wooton, and Sharon La Monica.



**Bees as pollinators:** Maureen Caban, Karen Clemmons, and Debra Sweet. Debra created a bookmark for children to color and take home. Read Karen's story on page 4.



*Photos by Miriam Taub, Class of 2011*



**Cut flowers:** Alissa Sasso. Ryan Knight and Sue Simpson also were on the cut flower team.



**Spotted lanternfly:** Anita Hall-Davis holds an SLF specimen. Karen Dennis and Melissa Sawvell were her team members. Melissa is pictured below. Karen, recently certified as an MG, was not present at the Fall Festival.



Dylan Grana and Karen Riede, horticultural assistant.



Lori Wooton (container gardening), Melissa Sawvell (spotted lanternfly), and Melissa's daughter, Hannah.



Bernadette White, Class of 2021, and Pauline Dubois, Class of 2015, distributed Rutgers factsheets.



Joel Flagler, Bergen County ag agent, with Nick Polanin, chair, Rutgers Agriculture and Natural Resources Department.



Martha Carlucci, Class of 2021, during cleanup.



Sophia Issa, with crayons and markers, was prepared for children activities.



Paul Sisko, Class of 2021, with coleus during the breakdown of the MG display on Sunday.

## The buzz on bees

**By Karen Clemments, Class of 2022**

My participation in the Fall Festival presentation themed “Bees as Pollinators” had its beginnings in my childhood, picking beefsteak tomatoes from my dad’s garden for a tasty ‘mater sandwich. As I gathered, bees accompanied me, skipping from tomato flowers to clover to buttercups.

Fast forward a decade, and I encountered the world of medicinal plants in the monastery garden at the Cloisters. The bees swirled around the fragrant flowers and herbs, conjuring up poultices, tinctures, and tisanes. Later on, my work at the New York Botanical Garden’s Mertz Library introduced me to the language of flowers, where, in addition to rosemary for remembrance, bees mean industry and the blessings of fertility, wisdom, and more.



*Photo by Karen Clemments*

In researching for this year’s Fall Festival, I found that I agree with Albert Einstein, who believed bees are so important to our ecosystem that if they disappear, humans would not survive for more than four years, which makes sense, since bees are responsible for pollinating 90% of the world’s top crops.

This is a real concern: Honeybee colonies have declined to about half since World War II, and the rusty-patched bumblebee, one of about 21 species of native eastern bumblebees, was listed as endangered in 2017. A few probable reasons for decline include pathogens, pesticides, habitat loss and degradation, farming practices, and global warming. Without bees, there will be no more nuts, coffee, cocoa, tomatoes, apples, or almonds, to name a few.

There is hope, however. Providing an abundance of year-round, pollen- and nectar-rich flowering plants concentrated in a small location, like a portion of your yard, can help. This creates dense forage that lets bees build up food reserves for rainy weather and winter survival. Add IPM (integrated pest management) to protect against pesticides and offer water during drought, and our bees will get a leg up on surviving and thriving.

[Editor’s note: Karen joined Maureen Caban and Debra Sweet on the Bees as Pollinators team.]