



GARDEN CLUB
OF VIRGINIA

VIRGINIA NEEDS A STATE NATIVE POLLINATOR

SUPPORT: SB155 The Virginia Native Pollinator, Brown-belted Bumble Bee, *Bombus griseocollis*

The Garden Club of Virginia recommends supporting SB155, recognizing Virginia's Brown-belted Bumble Bee, *Bombus griseocollis*, as the State Native Pollinator. Contact Diane Thomas, GCV Conservation and Beautification Committee Chairman, at conservation@gcvirginia.org.



WHY DO WE NEED A STATE NATIVE POLLINATOR?

- Virginia native pollinators provide an irreplaceable function in the ecosystem. Many plants require specific native pollinators to bear fruit and efficiently reproduce. This relationship, in turn, supports native birds and wildlife that depend on specific plants for survival.
- Native pollinators are increasingly threatened by habitat loss, extreme drought and weather events, and by non-natives that out-compete them.
- Over 450 species of native bees including bumble bees, mason bees, sweat bees and mining bees are Virginia native pollinators. They play an essential role in Commonwealth ecosystems.
- Though honeybees are efficient pollinators, they are non-natives, imported from Europe and cannot adequately support all plants, insect and bird life in our ecosystems.



WHY CHOOSE THE BROWN-BELTED BUMBLEBEE?

- The Brown-belted Bumblebee is found in all regions of Virginia,
- It provides a valuable pollination service called sonication, or "buzz pollination." Through vibration, the bee shakes the plant to gather its pollen. Buzz pollination is necessary for many crops important to Virginia farmers including tomatoes, blueberries, eggplants and other foods. Honeybees cannot provide this type of pollination.
- Brown-belted Bumblebees live in a small colony of around 50 bees. The queens emerge in the early spring and start a nest. Males help raise the young. Adults feed on nectar from flowers but feed their larvae mostly pollen protein. A variety of flowering plants, trees and shrubs that offer food throughout the growing season are essential to the health of brown-belted bumble bee populations and that biodiversity benefits other pollinators and Virginia wildlife as well.



Naming a state *native* pollinator is an important distinction that will help educate Virginians about the critical function our native pollinators provide and the intricate connection between Virginia's plants and wildlife. It will help raise awareness of the need to protect these vital resources. Thank you for your support for SB155!