

Lexington, a Certified Bee City

Waka Okuda, LHS senior and co-president of the LHS Bee Club

Thanks to the efforts of local Master Beekeeper Alix Bartsch, Citizens for Lexington Conservation, the Lexington Field and Garden Club, the Tree Commission, the Conservation Department, and many more local individuals and organizations, Lexington has become a certified Bee City as of November 2020! As an initiative of the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, a Bee City Affiliate commits to a Resolution to fund events, awareness, and pesticide policy reform to conserve a pollinator-friendly environment. While we work to fulfill these tenets over the coming year, Lexington will generate an annual report to showcase our conservation efforts to maintain our Bee City status. With joint dedication and efforts across Lexington residents who care for pollinator conservation, Lexington will surely remain a Bee City for many years to come!

Lexington resident Alix Bartsch is just one of three Eastern Apicultural Society certified Master Beekeepers in Massachusetts, and has kept bees in Lexington since the '70s. Now, she cares for millions of bees across town in community gardens, farms, and private clients with the help of Lexington High School's Bee Club. The current Bee Club leaders, myself and fellow senior Sophie Gregoretti, have continued the club after previous leader and founder Ms. Bartsch's daughter, Anastasia, graduated from LHS. After Ms. Bartsch first brought the idea of registering Lexington as a Bee City to us, Bee Club prepared a presentation for approval of the Bee City Resolution, and we were able to present at a Lexington Select Board meeting in October. Approved 4 to 0, Lexington is now the first Bee City in Massachusetts, and third in New England!

In the past few years, Bee Club has assisted Ms. Bartsch by harvesting honey supers (honeycomb that contains honey), extracting honey, and hosting workshops to involve more peers in the movement. Some of our workshops include beeswax candle making, planting flowers, annual hive excursions, and making "hive covers" out of repurposed freezer bags to insulate bee hives during the winter. In addition to our weekly meetings where we learn about beekeeping and bees, the Bee Club is currently working with LPS' Science Department to introduce the importance of pollinators to elementary schoolers across Lexington.

As bees are absolutely fundamental to life as we know it, we hope that Lexington residents continue their enthusiasm to conserve pollinators and their habitat, and proudly maintain our Bee City status.