

Biodiversity at UChicago

Viscous Flow (Jon Raybin and Julia Murphy)
PGC2017 Day 12 Greenest

username: jraybin
jraybin@uchicago.edu
University of Chicago

THE JOSEPH REG

Meeting with Richard

we met with Richard Bumstead, the associate director of campus environment at the University of Chicago. Richard is the university's landscape architect and manages green spaces on campus.



Pest and weed Control on Campus

Richard was not sure what specific pesticides, insecticides, and herbicides are currently used on campus, but he did offer some information on the University's approach to using them. The University aims to use materials that are as non-lethal as possible and to use them infrequently. One of the commonly used herbicides is a mixture of essential oils and Richard has pushed the University to go more organic in this regard. Two places on campus are treated with pesticides, insecticides, and herbicides, but everywhere else receives spot treatment only as needed based on visual inspection by the landscaping staff.

Part of the reason the University can use pesticides, herbicides, and insecticides infrequently is that the plants are supplied locally and native to the surrounding areas. Plants are sourced within a 200 mile radius of the University and are mostly midwest prairie varieties. Several garden beds, including the one pictured at right, are entirely native species.



Preserving Native Plant and Pollinator Species



Image Credit:

<https://www.nps.gov/media/photo/view.htm?id=66C17A35-155D-1510-B5D0-B1777716777>

The University of Chicago campus covers 217 acres, and it aims to use local plant species, because they are hardier and can better support native insect and bird life. All plants are sourced from within 200 miles of campus.

Notably, the University lies along monarch butterfly migration routes. Richard has worked to preserve all butterfly weed on campus to support the monarch's very narrow food palate. Austin Botanical Gardens has recently reported an uptick in butterfly migration, so efforts are hopefully paying off!

We were pleasantly surprised by the University's attention to supporting local plant and animal life!

urban Beekeeping at the Phoenix Farmer's Initiative

When speaking with Richard, we learned about the Phoenix Farmer's Initiative. The UC student government allocates money to innovative student ideas through the "Uncommon Fund." Using these funds, students Nick Lyon and John Havlik have brought beehives and urban gardens to the roofs of multiple campus buildings. They estimate that their urban hives house over 100,000 bees. As part of their efforts, they aim to educate the campus community and recruit more students to the urban beekeeping cause.

We had no idea that such exciting projects were taking place on campus. We plan on meeting with Nick and John to learn what we can about can beekeeping ourselves!



Phoenix Farmer's Initiative Rooftop Hive

Image Credit: <https://mag.uchicago.edu/university-news/buzz-innovation>