

Beekeepers, Botanists, More In Store For Pollinator Day 2024 At Pere Marquette

by Dalton Brown, News Reporter
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GRAFTON - [Pere Marquette State Park](#) in Grafton is celebrating Pollinator Day on June 22, 2024 from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. by hosting local beekeepers, botanists, and more to spread the word about Riverbend-native pollinators and the vital role they play in our ecosystem.

Lev Smolianski, natural resource coordinator for Pere Marquette State Park, noted their event falls directly in the middle of Pollinator Week from June 17-23, 2024. He said he's hoping for a big turnout for Pollinator Day, which will feature some special guests from the St. Clair Beekeeping Association, structural botanists, and more.

A Beekeeping Association representative will be on-hand to give an in-person beekeeping demonstration, featuring a beehive on a cart and information on how to start your own beehive. The botanists will share more about native plants and gardens and their relationship to local bees, and Smolianski said there may be a few additional surprise guests in store. The Pollinator Day festivities will also feature some other activities.

“We’re also going to have crafts, I’m going to try and get some local honey vendors, we are going to take some hikes,” Smolianski added. “It’s going to be a really fun day and we’re going to learn all about the wonderful insects we have here that pollinate our plants.”

The whole family is welcome to participate in Pollinator Day, and Smolianski said the park is focusing on getting the youth involved in environmental education.

“The way we’re working this through is going to be towards families, with the opportunity for older folks to talk to the beekeepers and ask them tough questions - but we’re really trying to get kids and young adults ... to come and learn about their environment, and that’s really what we’re trying to do with the park right now, is bring the youth in.”

Smolianski said there are several native species of bees whose population has declined due to habitat loss, climate change, and more. He hopes the Pollinator event can shed light on the importance of preserving these bees, but noted there are several non-bee pollinators as well - including birds, insects, and specifically beetles, who he said pollinate magnolias and even get “drunk” from the alkaloids the trees produce.

“We’re excited to bring some attention to these little creatures,” he said.

To find out even more about Pollinator Day and the relationship between native plant and pollinator species, check out the full interview with Smolianski at the top of this story or on [Riverbender.com/video](https://riverbender.com/video).