



The new buzz on the Atlanta Beltline is a pollinator garden installed at AMLI residential communities by the State Botanical Garden of Georgia at the University of Georgia.

Plants that attract bees, butterflies and insects were built into the landscaping at AMLI apartment complexes in the Old Fourth Ward of the city. Drew Watkins, a UGA alumnus and principal at Baytree Landscape Contractors Inc., helped plan and install the sustainable, environmentally responsible gardens.

“I always trust UGA as my go-to resource and the program from the botanical garden had everything we were looking for. It’s a great fit in continuing AMLI Residential’s commitment to sustainability,” Watkins says. “We loved the educational materials and signage along with the native plants grown at the sites.”

Connect to Protect is a program that combines public displays with educational materials to foster an understanding of the role that native plants play in maintaining biodiversity in urban and suburban landscapes of Georgia. There are more than 35 Connect to Protect gardens around the state, including in Macon-Bibb, Rabun, Putnam, Barrow, Oconee, Jackson, Houston, Richmond and Athens-Clarke counties.

The plants are grown at the Mimsie Lanier Center for Plant Studies at the State Botanical Garden in Athens.

“We’re thrilled to see the program grow and the connections being made,” says Heather Alley, conservation horticulturist for the garden. “These small urban oases for pollinators provide opportunities to help our ecosystem while also educating residents by showing them how to incorporate native plants into their own yards.”

[Learn more about Connect to Protect.](#)

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