

Habitat destruction in the name of development has dramatically reduced species biodiversity and with it the availability of pollinators for production of fresh produce has decreased. College campuses need to address the disconnect between humans and nature in highly urbanized areas and to promote better on-campus sustainability by making better use of available green space in and around student housing. Green space is a term that includes both natural ecosystems and key components of built environments such as public parks, gardens, forests, private yards and other natural areas. Urban gardens themselves produce many benefits such as providing a local food source, improving mental and physical health, providing education, lowering carbon emissions, and increasing pollination needed for plant reproduction that also contributes to oxygen production.

In collaboration with UWT Facilities Services, Student Housing, and Campus Safety and Security our project group has developed a proposal to repurpose the neglected raised beds located at student housing on the UWT campus. Our goal is to develop (1) a vegetable-herb garden in the center court that will help reduce student food insecurity, and (2) a flower-perennial garden placed around the building that will help promote pollination. The gardens will continue to be maintained year-round by paid resident students who organize volunteers. There will also be winter-summer gardens that have plants accustomed to each season; the plots themselves will be shifted on an annual basis to keep the soil healthy. Our team is currently in the process of applying for funding to implement this project.