

Savanna Francis

I am a 3rd year student studying a double major in Biology and Environmental Science. This summer, I oversaw a pilot project that monitors flower and pollinator interactions in the Harriet Irving Botanical Gardens. This project is in partnership with two other botanical gardens – the Arnold Arboretum of Harvard University and the Missouri Botanical Garden.

My favourite part of this work is that I am observing the botanical gardens grow and evolve in real time. I spend a lot of time looking at flowers in the gardens, so I can watch each wave of species as they move in and out. It is extraordinary to see nature progress with an intentional slowness.

As a Mi'kmaw woman in science, it is incredibly important that I bring my Indigenous perspective to the work that I do and practice Etuaptmumk/Two-Eyed Seeing. Being able to contribute to the science is a huge aspect of research that I enjoy.

I want to thank Heather Mills and my community of Pictou Landing First Nation for supporting me and making this summer research opportunity possible. L'pa paqsitpi wela'lioq!



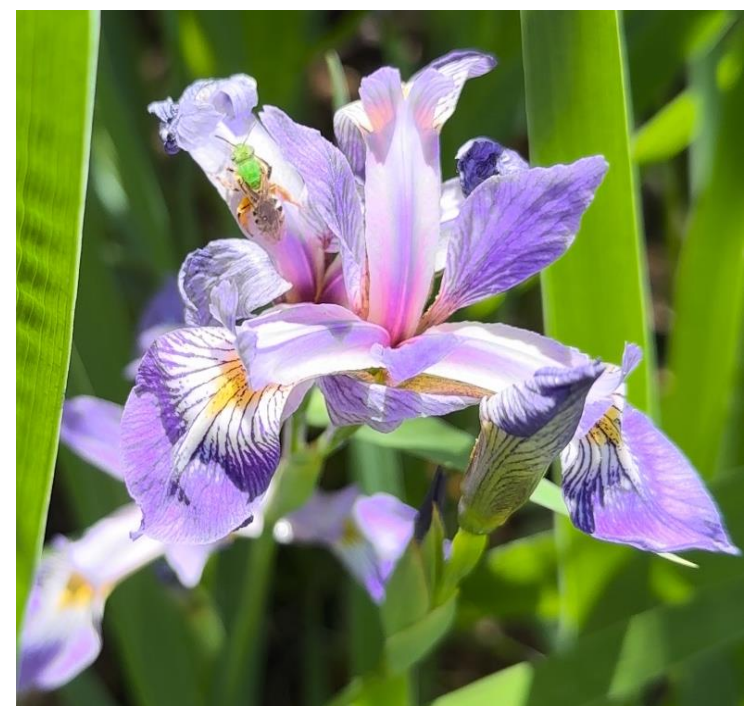
Harriet Irving Botanical Gardens Pollinator Project

Savanna Francis, Dr. Zoe Panchen

Pollinator species are crucial members of our ecosystems as they contribute to biodiversity and plant reproduction. Bees, butterflies, beetles, flies, wasps, and bats are all pollinators! Pollinators are vulnerable to climate change; therefore, it is necessary to do what we can to protect those who live alongside us and preserve an environment in which they can thrive.

On a sunny, low-wind, and reasonably cloudless day, when pollinators are most active at midday, I observed flowers in bloom in 5-minute intervals and recorded all pollinator interactions during the interval. I repeated the observations with different flower species. Over the summer, I recorded over 1000 pollinator interactions, with the most active pollinators being native bees, bumble bees, and flies!

This project allowed us to understand which pollinators are most active, their foraging habits in the Harriet Irving Botanical Gardens, and which flowers are preferred. My observations contribute data to the conservation of pollinator species and their habitats.



A bicoloured striped sweat bee (*Agapostemon virescens*) forages on a harlequin blueflag (*Iris versicolor*) flower.

