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New staff, Global Produce and Floral Show recap, Southeastern Growers includes Bee Better Certified, Bee Better Electric

Welcome to Julia Brokaw and Nicole Spehn!



Julia Brokaw is a Conservation Data and Technology Specialist within Xerces focused on projects that support the Living Farms Project and their on-farm habitat enhancement, pesticide risk mitigation and climate resilience efforts to support pollinator conservation in the food system. She also supports ongoing outreach and education efforts for pollinators in Minnesota. She has a PhD in Entomology from the University of Minnesota where she studied ground-nesting bee ecology, prescribed burning, tallgrass prairie restoration and seed mix design. She also studied conservation policy with a focus on environmental justice issues within pollinator conservation efforts. Prior to her graduate work, she studied pollinators in New York apple orchards, the deserts of California, and on blueberry farms in Michigan. Outside of work, she enjoys learning how to propagate native plants and being involved in local community projects.

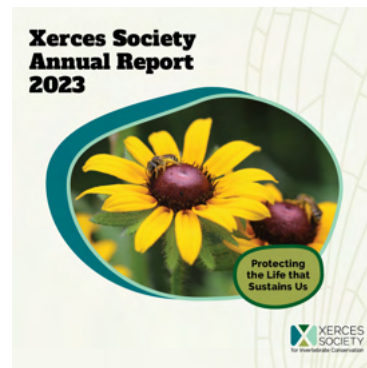


Nicole Spehn has joined the Living Farms Team as the new Agricultural Biodiversity Specialist-Habitat and Bee Better Certified Planner based in Tehachapi, CA. She works with agricultural producers in Southern California and beyond to create habitat for pollinators and beneficial insects and improve soil health. She strives to combine her background in native plants and her passion for sustainability to support growers in creating habitat for pollinators/beneficial insects while improving overall farm resilience.

Nicole has been working in conservation and restoration since 2015, with a focus on native plant materials development. She also has experience with IPM, landowner engagement, invasive species management, and habitat restoration. Most recently, she served as the Native Plant Nursery Project Leader for the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs Native Plant Nursery in Prairie City, OR. There she planned and implemented riparian restoration projects while overseeing the care/propagation of containerized plants for use in those projects within the John Day River Basin. She currently resides in Tehachapi, but grew up in a small town in northern Illinois. She has lived all across the country but loves the western US and mountains the most! Besides being a major plant nerd, Nicole spends her free time in her garden, foraging, hiking with her dogs, reading, making pottery, rock climbing, cooking, and baking sourdough bread.

Bee Better Certified in the Xerces 2023 Annual Report

The Xerces Society's 2023 Annual Report is now available to read [online](#). Head to the third page of the report to see what the Bee Better Certified team has accomplished over the last year.



Recap of IFPA's Global Produce and Floral Show

The Bee Better team walked the tradeshow floor at last week's [Global Produce and Floral Show](#), hosted by the [International Fresh Produce Association \(IFPA\)](#) in Atlanta, GA. We were thrilled to see lots of recognition for Bee Better Certified, and enjoyed having productive face-to-face conversations with our partners and stakeholders. While at the conference, the Bee Better team was invited to join the IFPA Sustainability Council and the Regenerative Agriculture Working Group. The council plays a critical role in the future of the global produce industry's pollinator and biodiversity work. We look forward to contributing to the conversation as a member of the council and working group.



Bee Better Certified featured in Silk Social Media Campaign

In partnership with Costco, Silk highlighted their Bee Better Certification with a social media campaign throughout the month of September. Through a series of Instagram reels and TikTok videos, several influencers shared recipes, photos and videos of Silk organic almondmilk, the only almondmilk that is Bee Better Certified. Thank you to Silk for the feature!



Bee Better Certified included in Southeastern Grocers Pollinator Health Commitments

Bee Better Certified has once again been included on a large retailer's list of accepted third-party certifications that meet their requirements that execute their [commitment to pollinator health](#) and IPM. This latest commitment by Southeastern Grocers, who owns Winn-Dixie grocery stores, is part of a growing trend by retailers to enact sustainability commitments that include IPM and promoting pollinator health. This is another exciting achievement for Bee Better Certified and continues on from inclusion on a number of other national and regional retailer lists; including Walmart, Whole Foods Market and Kroger.



Notes from the Field

The Living Farm team is busy, busy, busy planting new habitat at farms across the country this fall. We'll have a full report and recap of the planting season next time! Until then, here are a couple pictures from a recent planting of new habitat on a farm in Washington state.



What's new with Bee Better Electric

Back in 2021, the [Electric Power Research Institute \(EPRI\)](#) and The Xerces Society began a partnership on a project called Bee Better Certified Electric. The project aims to develop a nationally recognized, third-party-verified, voluntary pollinator certification program for electric power companies in the United States. This effort attempts to establish a science-based voluntary certification for solar sites, transmission rights-of-way, substations, and power generation sites to verify that vegetation is managed and protected in a manner that supports pollinators.

EPRI has recently released a technical [report](#) about the launch of the pilot testing phase of the project. EPRI will also be hosting an informational webinar on **November 7th** for those interested in learning more about the pilot testing. Registration information can be found [here](#).

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Learn more:

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