New York City EcoFlora

What is an EcoFlora?

Cody Hough

- Flora
  - List of all plant occurring *spontaneously* in a location

- Ecology
  - Study of interactions between all organisms and their environment

John Flannery

Plant blindness

- Bias towards animals
  - Education
  - Policy
  - Knowledge
  - *Awareness*
- Plants in background
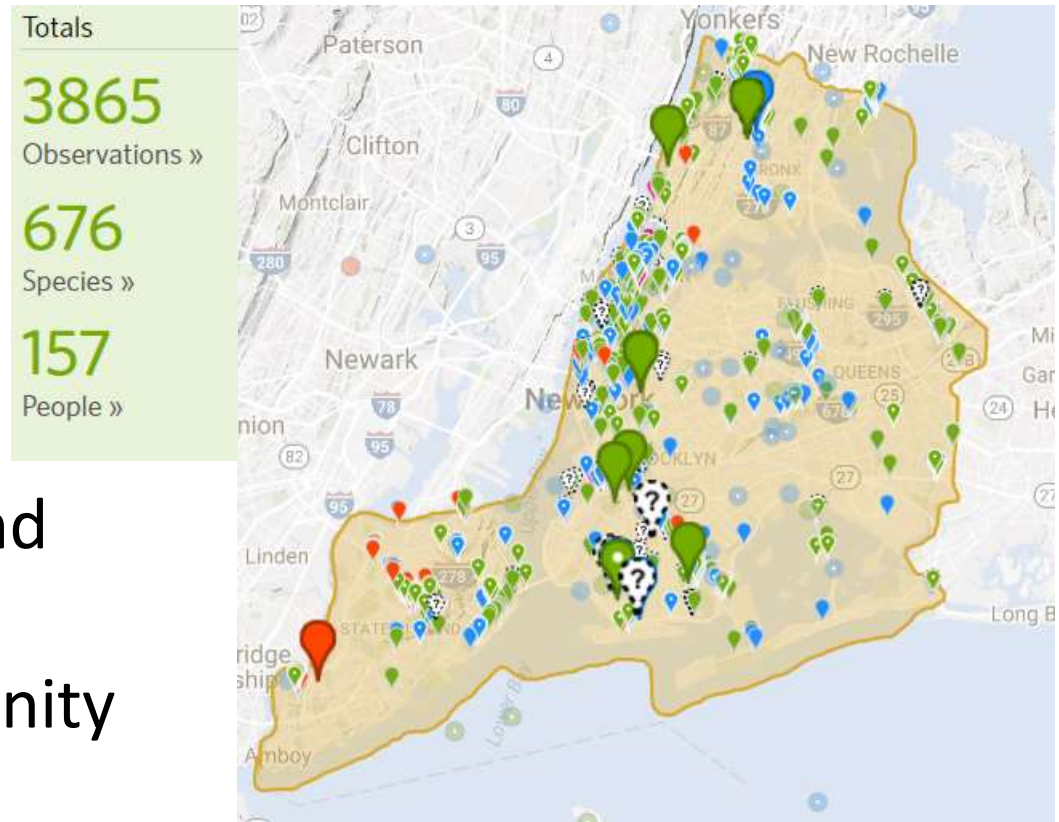- Effect on policy decisions

Charismatic megafauna

Charismatic flora?

Wikimedia Commons

?

Goals of the NYC EcoFlora

- Create list of plant species in NYC
- Better understand role of plants in NYC ecosystems
- Raise awareness and interest
- Engage the community
- Have fun!

Totals

3865
Observations »

676
Species »

157
People »

Goals for the Pilot Year

- Test volunteer protocols for….
  - Engagement
  - Entertainment
  - Validity
  - Repeatability
  - Accuracy
- Narrow down list of observable traits to *what really matters*

- Gather data on…
  - 30 test species
  - Their associates
    - Pollinators
    - Herbivores
    - Parasites
    - Seed dispersers
  - Their habitat
  - Their phenology

Ecological and Botanical Questions

Scale
Population size (number)
Population size (area)
Habitat type
Distance to nearest tree
Plant associations
Health of plant
Leaf litter
Cryptogams
Bare soil
Moisture content of soil
Canopy cover
Site condition
Soil condition (color)
Soil condition (firmness)

Observer status
Identification tool used
Change in habitat
Slope
Aspect
Number of nearby species
Animal sign
Plant traits for ID'ing
Anomalous plants
Disease presence
Substrate (concrete, forest floor, etc)
Weather
Disturbance measure
Insect interaction
Egg/larva presence
Time spent observing

Goals for this year

- We will create
  - Protocols for data-gathering
  - Usable city-wide
  - Understandable for all New Yorkers
- We will expand
  - Knowledge of plants
    - Locations
    - Associations
    - Interactions

- We will learn
  - What is compelling
  - What to expect going citywide
  - How we can advance our goals
- We will focus on 30 common species

Volunteer Role

- Gather data
  - Using iNaturalist
  - Taking notes
- Adjust to changing formats/objectives
- ***Provide feedback***
- Learn
- Have fun!

- 3 hour shifts
- 1x a week
- Will work in small groups
- Hoping for commitment through the summer, options for fall/winter involvement
- *There will be indoor opportunities*

Our support to you

- I'm on-site during data-gathering
- Identification support
- Regular updates on our progress
- Producing species guides
- Help with photo and technical details

Usual Volunteer Day

- Welcome and plan for the day (10 – 20 min)
- Observe! (60 - 80 min)
- Break (15 min)
- *Possible interpretive talks* Observe! (60 min)
- Gather feedback (15 min)
- End of 3-hour period

For today

- Learn about iNaturalist
- Volunteer forms
- Sign up for timeslots
  - *Aiming to max at 15 per timeslot*
- We'll answer your questions!