

News



Douglas Griffiths, chargé d'affaires at the mission, joins intern Esther Joe in displaying the NWF certification sign.

USUN REACHES GREEN MILESTONE

The U.S. Mission to the United Nations in Geneva, Switzerland, recently became the first State Department facility worldwide to be certified as a wildlife habitat by the National Wildlife Federation. The post gained the certification through the work of its “green team” and garden staff.

To be certified, applicants must meet such criteria as providing food sources for wildlife, such as seeds, fruits and berries; sources of water, such as birdbaths and ponds; wildlife cover, such as thickets and rock piles; and places where animals can raise their young, such as mature trees and

host plants for butterflies. Certification also requires sustainable gardening, such as using mulch, compost and chemical-free fertilizer. More information is at www.nwf.org/gardenforwildlife/ or by e-mail at info@nwf.org.

The mission’s staff transformed the mission gardens to minimize water and chemical use, maximize use of pollinator-friendly native plants, and ensure roosting, water and food sources. The green team even organized a workshop for the mission’s children, who made the birdhouses that were placed in the trees on the mission’s five-acre grounds.

The certification is the latest of several green accomplishments. For instance, working with the Bureau of Overseas Buildings Operations, the facility in 2005 became the first U.S. diplomatic building with a fully integrated solar-electric system, and in 2009, it became the second U.S. diplomatic facility in the world—and the first facility of any kind in Europe—to install an air-cooled chiller system based on magnetic levitation technology. The chiller demonstration project cuts the post’s carbon footprint and increases heating and cooling energy efficiency by up to 30 percent, OBO said.