City of Toronto

Toronto, ON

Mayor Olivia Chow

Pledge Summary

With the goal of protecting the more than 360 species of bees and more than 100 species of butterflies and other pollinators that call Toronto home, the City of Toronto has adopted a Pollinator Protection Strategy. The Strategy identifies a set of guiding principles, six priorities and 30 actions that the City and community can take to protect our diverse native pollinator community. Toronto is home to more than three million people whose diversity and experiences make this great city Canada's leading economic engine and one of the world's most diverse and livable cities.

Action Items Committed for 2024

Communications and Convening

- Issue a proclamation to raise awareness about the decline of the monarch butterfly and the species' need for habitat. This proclamation must incorporate a focus on monarch conservation.
- Launch or maintain a public communication effort to encourage residents to plant monarch gardens at their homes or in their neighborhoods. (If you have community members who speak a language other than English, we encourage you to also communicate in that language; Champion Pledges must communicate in that language.)
- Engage with community garden groups and urge them to plant native milkweeds and nectar-producing plants.
- Create a community-driven educational conservation strategy, initiative, or practice that focuses on and benefits local, underserved residents.
- Engage with gardening leaders and partners (e.g., Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, Nature Centers, Native Plant Society Chapters , other long-standing and influential community leaders) to support monarch butterfly conservation.

Program and Demonstration Gardens

- Host or support a native seed or plant sale, giveaway or swap.
- Earn or maintain recognition for being a wildlife-friendly city by participating in other wildlife and habitat conservation efforts (i.e., National Wildlife Federation's Community Wildlife Habitat program).
- Add or maintain native milkweed and nectar-producing plants in gardens in the community.
- Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

Past Pledge Archive

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Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Olivia Chow	2026	1/15/2026	
Mayor Oliva Chow	2025	4/29/2025	Leadership Circle
Mayor Olivia Chow	2024	4/17/2024	Leadership Circle
Mayor John Tory	2023	2/14/2023	Leadership Circle
Mayor John Tory	2022	3/16/2022	Leadership Circle
Mayor John Tory	2021	3/19/2021	Leadership Circle

Action Items

In total, how many individuals have been reached through the Mayors' Monarch Pledge in your community this year (Jan-Dec)? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field below (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only.).

3400

Of the total number of individuals engaged, how many youth (0-18) were reached through the Mayors' Monarch Pledge in your community this year (Jan. - Dec.)? If none, please write 0." (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only.)

1000

In total, how many acres of monarch habitat have been created in your city in the last 12 months? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 3). Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.

0.5

Where was the habitat created this year? Example locations may include residences, schools, places of worship, rights-of-way, roadsides, community gardens, shared public spaces, and more.

Private yards, schools, places of worship, rights-of-way, community centres, City parks

How are you leveraging the Mayors' Monarch Pledge program to engage marginalized communities, such as low-income communities or communities of color?

Prioritizing Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIA) and Emerging Neighbourhoods (EN) in Toronto to provide funding for the creation of pollinator habitat and related community engagement initiatives. Working with Social Development staff to evaluate applications from NIA and EN neighbourhoods, and project applications that are led by and/or seek to specifically serve Black, Indigenous and equity-seeking groups.

What was your community's motivation for taking and continuing to work on the Mayors' Monarch Pledge?

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Toronto is uniquely positioned to be a leader in urban monarch conservation initiatives. While Toronto is the largest city in Canada with a dense population, the city also features significant greenspace across the private and public realm. Our geographic location on the shore of Lake Ontario means the city is in many cases a ‘last stop’ for monarchs before they embark on their journey to Mexico for overwintering. This motivates the need to establish rich pollinator habitat and a variety of sources of native plants for monarchs at all stages of development. In conjunction with other biodiversity conservation efforts made by the city, the Mayor’s Monarch Pledge and Pollinator Protection Strategy formally recognize the necessity to support monarchs in an urban landscape by harnessing available greenspace for high quality habitat creation.

What resources have been most helpful to you thus far and what new resources would you like to see to help meet your goals? What resources would be useful to help expand equitable engagement in community processes and access to high-quality, usable nature?

Helpful: • Meetings with other municipal government actors committed to building pollinator habitat facilitated by the Canadian Wildlife Federation and the David Suzuki Foundation • Educational workshops and webinars led by Pollinator Partnership Canada • External grassroots organizations extending the reach of the City’s messaging and education around pollinator habitat creation and monarch conservation Would like to see more: • Peer-reviewed research on the impact of urban development, urban beekeeping, climate change and other pressures on wild pollinators • Comprehensive native plant species lists local to the area • Accessible suppliers of a diverse selection of native plant material and seeds • Outreach for landscaping professionals and corporate plant nurseries/suppliers • Institutional adoption of native plant landscaping in an urban setting

What else should we know about your monarch butterfly conservation efforts over the last year?

New for 2024: We launched our How to PollinateTO training series which provides the knowledge needed to create pollinator habitat in Toronto with a focus on the lifecycle needs of pollinators and native plants.

Selected Action Items

Issue a proclamation to raise awareness about the decline of the monarch butterfly and the species’ need for habitat. This proclamation must incorporate a focus on monarch conservation.

Date of Proclamation:

June 17, 2024 & August 19, 2024

Title of Proclamation (i.e. – Monarch Day or Pollinator Week):

Pollinator Week & Flight of the Monarch Day

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Upload a copy of your proclamation.

Flight of the Monarch_Final 2024.pdf

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

Pollinator Week_Final 2024.pdf

Launch or maintain a public communication effort to encourage residents to plant monarch gardens at their homes or in their neighborhoods. (If you have community members who speak a language other than English, we encourage you to also communicate in that language; Champion Pledges must communicate in that language.)

Please describe the methods of public communication below (e.g., printed materials, social media, print media).

• Printed materials – pamphlets, handouts and fact sheets distributed at all Live Green Toronto events across the City (Community Environment Days in each ward, the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair, the Home Show, etc.) • Social media – Ongoing campaigns for sustainable landscaping, native plant gardening, information on monarchs; postal code-targeted ads for residents in NIAs • Print media – Promotion of PollinateTO grant for community habitat creation in local newspapers, including translated newspaper ads

Engage with community garden groups and urge them to plant native milkweeds and nectar-producing plants.

Please describe the groups you engaged with and how you engaged with these groups below.

• Presentation for Toronto's BIA association • Tabling at seed exchange events

Create a community-driven educational conservation strategy, initiative, or practice that focuses on and benefits local, underserved residents.

Please describe the process to create the strategy , the strategy goals and content, and/or results of implementation. Please also identify who was engaged in this process, what partnerships were established, and how you engaged these groups. Provide a link, if possible.

The PollinateTO Grants program partnered with ENAGB Indigenous Youth Organization to extend he reach of pollinator habitat building in Toronto through a series of community planting days, plant kit giveaways in NIA neighbourhoods, and conducted events with these elements in Thorncliffe park with an after-school youth program participating in a planting day on-site at Thorncliffe Park Urban Farm and the Rexdale Community Hub as part of their end-of-season harvest party. Research was conducted to identify commonly spoken non-English languages at the neighbourhood level to inform the creation of geographically

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targeted translated ads to reach a broader audience that may not engage with programming in English. Social Development staff with community-level connections were engaged in the PollinateTO grant promotion and review design and processes to encourage participation from equity-deserving groups and residents in NIA and EN neighbourhoods. Materials developed and distributed at events that discuss creating pollinator habitat in small spaces at low cost (ex. Balcony container gardening with found or low-cost materials), with free materials provided at events (ex. Hand trowels, seeds).

Host or support a native seed or plant sale, giveaway or swap.

How many plants were sold and/or given away at your event? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

2000

How many people attended your event? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

1700

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to host the event?

To celebrate Pollinator Week, the City of Toronto partnered with the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) to host native plant kit giveaways to residents at subway stations in target areas of Toronto (stations within or near NIA neighbourhoods). City Councillors and Senior Management at the TTC were supportive of this initiative, where over 1,700 residents were engaged over two days at two different TTC subway stations. 2,000 native wildflower seedlings were provided at no cost to residents for planting. In partnership with the North American Native Plant Society, the City of Toronto facilitated a native plant kit contest for the 3rd consecutive year where residents enter to win one of 40 kits containing 10 native plant seedlings and a native shrub of their choosing. Over 650 residents entered the contest in 2024. City-funded PollinateTO projects additionally facilitate and participate in seed and plant swaps/giveaways throughout Toronto as part of the necessary community engagement aspects of their projects.

Earn or maintain recognition for being a wildlife-friendly city by participating in other wildlife and habitat conservation efforts (i.e., National Wildlife Federation’s Community Wildlife Habitat program).

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

Attended the Canadian Wildlife Federation’s event on habitat creation in rights-of-way spaces, presenting the event as a featured municipality to share achievements and best practices. Toronto was the fist city to be recognized as a Bee City through Bee City Canada, and have continued to engage in actions promoted by Bee City Canada, as well as submitting annual reports on achievements and development of pollinator protection programming.

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What program was launched or maintained to complete this effort? (Please include a link to the program, if possible)

The PollinateTO Grants program was maintained for its 5th year as a recognizable community-facing source of information and funding for the creation of habitat. toronto.ca/pollinateTO The City's webpage "How to Help Wild Bees and Other Pollinators" was maintained and updated as an additional information source on local events, workshops, plant lists, and best practices guides for biodiverse landscaping to support bees, butterflies, moths and other wild pollinators. toronto.ca/wildbees The actions outlined in the Pollinator Protection Strategy are continually consulted for measuring achievements and development of programming both internally and with the public to continue achieving actions. Pollinator Protection Strategy – City of Toronto

Add or maintain native milkweed and nectar-producing plants in gardens in the community.

What community organizations, groups, or leaders (if any) did you partner with or engage to complete this effort?

As part of PollinateTO-funded projects, all groups are required to plant native milkweed and goldenrod at their project sites.

How many plants were planted? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

2100

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

Since 2020, PollinateTO projects have been responsible for the planting of an estimated 2100 native milkweed plants in Toronto.

Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

How many garden signs are being displayed and where are they located? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)

1600

Please describe the educational information on the sign(s), and provide any links to externally purchased sign(s).

PollinateTO provides free signage to all Toronto residents through Community Environment Days, which take place in each ward on up to two days between April and September each year. PollinateTO grant recipients additionally have several opportunities to get signage for their sites, and may use their grant funding to create signage, whether professionally printed or handmade signage. Each of PollinateTO's 500 funded gardens have signage present, with some featuring educational signage for each species planted.

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Engage with gardening leaders and partners (e.g., Master Naturalists, Master Gardeners, Nature Centers, Native Plant Society Chapters , other long-standing and influential community leaders) to support monarch butterfly conservation.

How many community organizations and groups participated? Please list them below.

North American Native Plant Society Toronto Botanical Garden Project Swallowtail Pollinator Partnership Canada Eshkiniigjik Naandwechigegamig, Aabiish Gaa Binjibaaying - ENAGB Youth Program Grow Wild Native Plant Nursery

Please describe the extent of engagement with these groups and their monarch butterfly conservation efforts.

North American Native Plant Society: Partnered for native plant kit contest, with pickup occurring at the annual native plant sale at Toronto Botanical Gardens where contest winners had the option of also attending the sale and purchasing more native plant material. The North American Native Plant Society is a renowned volunteer-led non-profit organization committed to native plant distribution and habitat creation. Toronto Botanical Garden: Events related to pollinator gardening and monarch conservation were promoted throughout the year on Toronto's "Events of Interest" section of the How to Help Wild Bees and Other Pollinators webpage. Toronto Botanical Garden provided space on-site for the native plant kit contest pick up and a native tree and shrub giveaway in collaboration with Urban Forestry for PollinateTO grantees. Project Swallowtail: City Staff on the steering committee Pollinator Partnership Canada: Official trustee for PollinateTO grants Eshkiniigjik Naandwechigegamig, Aabiish Gaa Binjibaaying - ENAGB Youth Program: ENAGB is a registered charity dedicated to providing cultural, employment, life skills, holistic wellness and recreational opportunities to indigenous youth. Programming is designed through youth participation and works to build self-esteem, confidence, skills, and self-determination. ENAGB supports habitat creation in Toronto through Memtigwaake Kinomaage Maawnjading (the forest we gather in to learn how to care for the Earth) along the Humber River including revitalizing rare urban riparian habitat, the creation of a pilot seed orchard project and reintroducing significant medicinal species along the river. This work supports the revitalization of Indigenous cultural practices and empowers youth to restore nature by offering resources and support such as seed starting, mentoring and specialized training. Grow Wild Native Plant Nursery: PollinateTO staff visited Grow Wild native plant nursery to assist in preparing native plant seedling kits to be distributed at giveaways as a experiential learning opportunity on growing native plants from seed and to better inform residents of sustainable practices actioned to grow native plants for the program's use, where the seedlings included in kits and community planting days had come from, and methods of ensuring plant survival for habitat creation success.

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