# City of Richmond Hill

Richmond Hill, ON

Mayor David West

## Pledge Summary

The City of Richmond Hill is a city located in southern Ontario. With a population of approximately 200,000, Richmond Hill is a lower tier municipality in York Region with portions of the City falling within Ontario's Greenbelt and Oak Ridges Moraine. The City has committed to foster natural and built communities that support pollinators through the Environment Strategy and partnerships with non-profit organizations and designations.

## Action Items Committed for 2025

### 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.
- Engage with city parks and recreation, public works, sustainability, and other relevant staff to identify opportunities to revise and maintain mowing programs and milkweed / native nectar plant planting programs.
- 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.
- Engage with developers, planners, landscape architects, and other community leaders and organizers engaged in planning processes to identify opportunities to create monarch habitat.

### Program and Demonstration Gardens

- Host or support a native seed or plant sale, giveaway or swap.
- Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.
- Plant or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location.
- Launch or maintain an outdoor education program(s) (e.g., at schools, after-school programs, community centers and groups) that builds awareness and creates habitat by engaging students, educators, and the community in planting native milkweed and

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pollinator-friendly native nectar plants (i.e., National Wildlife Federation's Schoolyard Habitats program and Monarch Mission curriculum).
- 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.
- Launch, expand, or continue an invasive species removal program that will support the re-establishment of native habitat for monarch butterflies and other pollinators.
- Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

### Systems Change

- Change weed or mowing ordinances to allow for native prairie and plant habitats.
- Increase the percentage of native plants, shrubs and trees that must be used in city landscaping ordinances and encourage use of milkweed, where appropriate.
- Integrate monarch butterfly conservation into the city's Park Master Plan, Sustainability Plan, Climate Resiliency Plan or other city plans.
- Reduce or eliminate the use of herbicides, pesticides, or other chemicals that are harmful to monarchs and pollinators and urban wildlife.
- Launch, expand, or continue one or more ordinances to reduce light pollution to benefit urban wildlife.
- Launch, expand, or continue an effort to change municipal planting ordinances and practices to include more native milkweed and native nectar producing plants at city properties.

## Past Pledge Archive

| Mayor Name | Program Year | Pledge Date | Achievement |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mayor David West | 2026 | 1/28/2026 | |
| Mayor David West | 2025 | 3/11/2025 | Leadership Circle |
| Mayor David West | 2024 | 2/6/2024 | Leadership Circle |
| Mayor David West | 2023 | 1/24/2023 | Leadership Circle |
| Mayor David West | 2022 | 11/2/2022 | Leadership Circle |
| Mayor David Barrow | 2021 | 3/24/2021 | 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.).**

3349

**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**

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**none, please write 0." (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only.)**

854

**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.**

3.56

**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.**

• Parks and Green Spaces: Bayview Hill Community Park, Stavert Park, Patterson Parkette, Harrington Park, Dorothy Price Park; Meadow creation at David Dunlop Observatory (DDO) as part of a five-year restoration plan; Rumble Trail Pond; • Community Gardens: Harmony Habitat Garden, Forster Collective Garden, Kids Right to Know Community Garden (with pollinator patches) • Indigenous medicinal gardens: Central Library, Oak Ridges Community Centre, Phyllis Rawlinson Park, Richmond Green Park, Hill House Hospice • Schools: Holy Trinity School

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

The city uses a Tree Planting Prioritization Tool, which considers metrics related to vulnerable populations. This allows targeted outreach and subsidized native plants and trees for marginalized communities. Programs like Healthy Yards, which distributes trees, shrubs, and pollinator-friendly plant kits, are marketed specifically in these areas. Educational initiatives such as workshops and webinars are designed to be accessible, and efforts are made to reach these communities through local partnerships with community gardens, libraries, and cultural groups.

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

Richmond Hill's recent Council Strategy Plan (2024 to 2027) identified Pillar 1 – Growing a Livable Sustainable Community, prioritizing environmental sustainability practices in collaboration with the community. In addition, the City's Environment Strategy reflects the community's desire, defining 10 interrelated themes including local food and pollinators. The Mayors' Monarch Pledge compliments and enhances many of the programs laid out in the Strategic Plan and Environmental Strategy.

**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?**

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Attending workshops, webinars and working groups has helped tremendously to see what actions other municipalities are taking and how the lessons they provided can be applied to Richmond Hill. More resources on balcony gardening and gardening for small spaces would help us engage and reach residents that are in high density areas, for example templates for easy “pollinator habitat in a box” projects for renters or residents without yards. Short videos or step-by-step photo guides on planting/what to plant, creating container pollinator gardens, and reducing/eliminating pesticide use. In addition, opportunities to engage community members in community science initiatives like Monarch tagging could help to engage a broader audience.

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

Richmond Hill hosts a Pollinator Working Group which contains representatives across the City from different divisions including Natural Environment, Sustainability, and Parks Operations. Since its inception in 2018, this group has met twice per year to discuss how city programs can benefit pollinators, barring the hiatus taken during the pandemic. At each meeting the group reviews the success of ongoing pollinator-related activities and establishes a work plan to implement further innovative projects that aim to increase and improve pollinator habitats within Richmond Hill. The City’s Bee City designation was renewed in 2024 complimenting and enhancing the Mayors Monarch Pledge initiatives due to similar program interests to promote healthy, sustainable habitats and communities for pollinators. In 2023 the City became a certified Bird Friendly City which has many overlapping and complimenting themes, for example, the World Migratory Bird Day (WMBD) theme in 2024 was Insects and in 2025 WMBD was focused on Shared Space and creating more nature friendly cities and communities. The City aims to develop additional partnerships with groups and agencies interested in similar goals to enrich and support future butterfly conservation efforts. The city has also been providing additional training to operations staff regarding invasive plant species; staff have been taught how to ID the most aggressive, ecosystem-disrupting invasive species and how to properly remove them. Staff have also initiated a program to better maintain natural areas to enhance and promote a variety of pollinator habitats. Richmond Hill has demonstrated strong community engagement in its conservation efforts, with 90 community stewardship events and 50 volunteer events involving a total of 1,730 volunteers who contributed over 3560 hours. This significant level of participation underscores the community's dedication to environmental conservation, which indirectly supports monarch butterfly conservation through activities like habitat restoration and native planting. The city has also made substantial progress in habitat restoration and enhancement. Over the past year, Richmond Hill has rehabilitated 4.6ha of natural areas. These efforts are crucial for creating and maintaining suitable habitats that benefit monarchs and other pollinators, helping to sustain local biodiversity. Through the Healthy Yards Program, Richmond Hill distributed 1,270 native trees and shrubs, 2,824 native perennials, 140 composters, and 300 rain barrels, engaging 650 households in pollinator-friendly practices. These distributions help increase the presence of native plants that are essential for monarch habitats while encouraging sustainable gardening among residents. Richmond Hill’s long-term restoration efforts further support monarch conservation, with 3,525 trees and shrubs planted in projects that enhance local green spaces. These ongoing initiatives not only foster habitats for monarchs but also contribute to the city’s ecological diversity and resilience. Educational outreach remains a key component of Richmond Hill's strategy. The city held 7 workshops and webinars with over 160 participants and/or organized and attended over 100 outreach

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events , sharing valuable information about pollinator-friendly practices. These educational initiatives aim to raise awareness and encourage residents to actively support monarch conservation and pollinator-friendly practices in their own communities.

## Selected Action Items

### Reduce or eliminate the use of herbicides, pesticides, or other chemicals that are harmful to monarchs and pollinators and urban wildlife.

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

**What is the status of this action? Please limit your answer to either "complete" or "in progress" in the answer field below.**

**If this action is Complete, please include the date it was completed and share a 1-2 sentence description. Please include a copy of the policy by uploading or linking below.**

**If this action is In Progress, please describe your progress and a target date when you plan to complete action.**

### 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 16 to 22nd, 2025

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

Pollinator Week

**Upload a copy of your proclamation.**

PollinatorWeek_Day 2_Theme & Medicine Gardens.png

**Upload a copy of your proclamation.**

PollinatorWeek_Day 4_Monarch.png

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

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

In 2025 Richmond Hill held two in person workshops in partnership with the TRCA focused on gardening and pollinator habitat. In addition to this, the City partnered with the Richmond Hill Horticultural Society and South Lake Simcoe Master Gardeners to hold workshops focused on pollinators for the Richmond Hill Blooms program. The following events workshops and information sessions were held to address pollinators and their habitat: • Wildscaping: Planting Design with a Canadian Twist (June 3, 2025) • Problem Solving: How a Wildlife Garden Evolves (February 4, 2025) • Maximize Your Healthy Yards (April 14, 2025) • Appetite for Gardening (May 14, 2025) • Winterize your Lawn and Garden (October 5, 2025) These workshops and webinars informed participants on the importance of native wildflowers including milkweed species to at-risk pollinators, such as monarch butterflies, and outlined how to create a garden that can serve as habitat for these species throughout their lifecycle. They also highlighted other benefits of planting native species to act as further incentive, including reduced maintenance and resources these plants require, especially in the winter and the variety of blooms they provide throughout the growing season. Altogether these presentations reached approximately 250 residents. In addition, the city's Bird Team (Bird Friendly Richmond Hill) attended several events throughout the year distributing native wildflower seeds (which included butterfly milkweed seeds and other nectar producing plants) and provided information on creating gardens and habitats that support bird species; in doing so, this also supports creating habitat for pollinator species and insects.

## 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.)

**Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.**

Pollinator Week_FB.jpg

**Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.**

RH Blooms_FB.jpg

**Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.**

RH Collective Gardens_FB.jpg

**Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.**

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RH Healthy Yards_FB.jpg

**Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.**

X_RH_HeathyYards_June25_2025.png

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

Richmond Hill's website (www.RichmondHill.ca/Pollinators) provides information to residents about the essential role pollinators play in ecosystems and food production, and compiles all of the city's ongoing efforts to support our native pollinator populations. The city's participation in the Mayor's Monarch Pledge is advertised here, as is our designation as a Bee City: an honour bestowed by the likeminded Bee City Canada program which Richmond Hill has held since 2018. The website also suggests actions residents can take to establish and improve habitat for butterflies and bees on their properties, including a list of pollinator-friendly plants compiled by the National Wildlife Federation. In addition to the official website, Richmond Hill encourages residents to become active stewards of pollinator habitat through social media. Social media posts are used to advertise environmental stewardship events, to provide information during Pollinator Week, and to promote educational webinars. This information was also included in advertisements to community residents, including in city councilor newsletters . Some examples include : • RH Blooms Tweet • Healthy Yards Promotion • Pollinator Week (June 16 to 22nd, 2025) The city further extended its reach through the efforts of our Sustainability team. Educational booths were hosted at over 15 summer events including the Ward 3 Family BBQ (June 13th, 2025) and Regional Councilors Summer event (June 7th, 2025) to directly engage residents on municipal environmental concerns including pollinator habitat. City staff also put up informational displays at local community centres for Pollinator Week which encouraged actions on weaving connections for and with pollinators. Richmond Hill's annual Healthy Yards program capitalizes on the awareness of pollinator habitat built throughout the year by facilitating residents' efforts to plant native pollinator gardens at their homes or in their neighbourhoods. Sun-tolerant and shade-tolerant butterfly plant kits were partly subsidized and sold at a reduced cost to encourage residents to plant these species in their gardens. The kits included several different Milkweed species in addition to other native and pollinator friendly wildflowers. For some residents this may have been the first time they considered planting these varieties in their garden, since many are used to the ornamental or limited native plant selection offered in many nurseries or big-box stores such as Walmart or Home Depot garden centers. In this way, the Healthy Yards program brought awareness to gardening with native species and what this means for the biodiversity of our urban areas. The hope is that these native plants prosper and spread in gardens for years to come - much to the residents' and pollinators' delight. Finally, Richmond Hill held its annual RH Blooms Garden Social Event on September 6th, 2025. This event brings together organizations and residents to improve education and awareness around environmental initiatives, primarily focused on gardening and the benefits pollinators provide to the community. This event included a tree and shrub give away, many of the trees were host plants for a variety of lepidoptera species.

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## Engage with city parks and recreation, public works, sustainability, and other relevant staff to identify opportunities to revise and maintain mowing programs and milkweed / native nectar plant planting programs.

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

• Infrastructure Delivery Services • Policy Planning (Sustainability and Parks and Natural Heritage Planning) • Public Works Operations (Urban Forestry, Natural Environment and Horticulture Section, Parks Services and Infrastructure Services Section)

**Please describe the extent of engagement with these groups and revisions/maintenance implemented for mowing or planting programs.**

The City continues to include natural low maintenance areas within their park redesign and revitalization plans. Presently, three of our current concept plans, including David Barrow Square, Town Park Master Plan and Heron View Garden have pollinator focused gardens and low-maintenance naturalized areas incorporated within the designs. In addition, over 15 parks have naturalized/no-mow areas with pollinator friendly plants in the seed mix that have been implemented within the last five years. This includes Bayview Hill Community Park, construction was completed in June 2025, which included large pollinator meadow habitats and no-mow naturalized areas with native seed mixes; Patterson Parkette and Stavert Park have recently been converted to dedicated perennial pollinator gardens; and Minthorn and Dorothy Price Park which are recently constructed rain gardens with pollinator species. The City also implements the updated Sustainability Metrics Program Guidebook (Updated 2024) through the development planning process. This encourages developers to incorporate pollinator friendly plants and habitats within their site plan applications.

## 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.**

• Richmond Hill Garden & Horticultural Society • Lake Simcoe South Master Gardeners • LEAF • York Region Environmental Alliance • TRCA • Kids Right to Know • Harmony Habitat Garden • Forster Collective Garden • Bird Friendly Richmond Hill

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

In 2025 Richmond Hill Blooms program continued its tradition of celebrating the beautiful, well-maintained front gardens throughout our community. Residents were encouraged to nominate their neighbours for their efforts in creating these gardens and were directed to informational webinars that promoted native wildflower gardens. This program closed off with a Garden Social on September 6th, 2025, where several environmentally focused exhibitors attended, including the TRCA, Kid’s Right to Know, Yor Region Environmental

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Alliance, York Region, the City's Natural Environment and Sustainability sections. This event hosted over 360 attendees and was held at Richmond Green and included a tree and shrub give away for attendees. This event created an opportunity for organizations to engage with the community on pollinator friendly habitats and programs, strengthening ties between Richmond Hill, its residents, and community organizations. More information on this program can be found through the link below: www.RichmondHill.ca/Richmond-Hill-Blooms

## 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)

Healthy Yards sold 4094 plants (1270 trees and shrubs, 2824 wildflowers). 100 trees/shrubs for Richmond Hill Blooms End of Year Garden Social giveaway.

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

1010

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

In 2025 Richmond Hill's annual Healthy Yards plant sale continued to help residents in the creation of native pollinator habitat on their property. In partnership with York Region, the city offered native tree, shrub, and wildflower species at subsided costs. Wildflowers were sold in bundled kits of either sun-tolerant or shade-tolerant species to cater to residents with different garden conditions. Each kit contained a species of milkweed as well as other nectar-bearing plants to attract a variety of butterflies, other insects, and birds. The Healthy Yards program continues to be very popular with residents and allows the city to facilitate the naturalization of private property within city limits. In 2025, the City piloted a project to expand the Healthy Yards program to include schools; two pollinator gardens were installed at Holy Trinity School in Richmond Hill in partnership with the Richmond Hill Horticultural Society. By connecting public and private schools with organizations dedicated to ecological education, we hope to create outdoor classrooms that will create native habitat to pollinators get children interested in the wildlife right outside their doors. Further information on the Healthy Yards program can be found through the link below: www.RichmondHill.ca/HealthyYards Additionally, for over 20 years, the City of Richmond Hill has run the Richmond Hill Blooms program which encourages residents to beautify their front gardens using pollinator plants. For the past 3 years, the Blooms program has run an End of Year Garden Social which is an interactive event that collaborates with multiple collective gardens (Kids Right to Know, Sussex Community Garden, Green Hills Garden), nurseries (Northland Nurseries), partners like the Richmond Hill Garden and Horticulture Society and Lake Simcoe South Master Gardeners, to raise awareness for pollinators and pollinator initiatives. This includes giveaway for 100 native trees/shrubs to support pollinator habitat.

## Earn or maintain recognition for being a wildlife-friendly city by participating in other wildlife and habitat conservation efforts (i.e.,

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## 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?**

• Bee City Canada • Nature Canada • Arbour Day Foundation

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

Since 2018 Richmond Hill has been designated a “Bee City” by the non-profit organization Bee City Canada. This designation recognizes the city’s ongoing efforts to create pollinator habitat, educate residents on the importance of pollinators, and celebrate Pollinator Week in June. Many of Richmond Hill’s Natural Environment and Sustainability efforts contribute to our status as a “Bee City”, including our Healthy Yards program, Community Garden program, and Richmond Hill Blooms. On November 7th, 2023 Richmond Hill received certification from Nature Canada as a Bird Friendly City due to efforts to restore native habitat and protect local bird populations. As part of this certification, the City held a World Migratory Bird Day in partnership with the RH Public Library and Bird Friendly Richmond Hill on May 3rd, 2025 focused on creating shared spaces in our communities. In addition, the Bird Team (Bird Friendly Richmond Hill) attended several events promoting local conservation efforts that support birds and other wildlife, such as monarchs. The City is also a Tree City of the World for five consecutive years; this recognition is awarded to City’s that have a strong foundation of caring for trees and woodlands in the community, which also supports pollinator habitat. More information on these certifications and the programs that earned them can be found through the links below: www.BeeCityCanada.org/city/richmond-hill/ www.NatureCanada.ca/Bird-Friendly-City www.RichmondHill.ca/CommunityGardens www.RichmondHill.ca/HealthyYards www.RichmondHill.ca/Richmond-Hill-Blooms www.RichmondHill.ca/UrbanForest

## Change weed or mowing ordinances to allow for native prairie and plant habitats.

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

• Public Works Operations (Park Services Infrastructure) • By-Law Services • Infrastructure Delivery Services • Parks and Natural Heritage Planning.

**What is the status of this action? Please limit your answer to either "complete" or "in progress" in the answer field below.**

Complete

**If this action is Complete, please include the date it was completed and share a 1-2 sentence description. Please include a copy of the policy by uploading or linking below.**

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On March 25th, 2019, the City updated the Grass and Weeds By-Law (No. 31-19). Included in this revision was an exemption of the by-law for environmental sensitive areas and natural heritage lands, including floodplains, meadows, and boulevard ditches. The by-law also does not require the mowing of wildflowers on private property that are contained within clearly defined gardens. The full text of the Grass and Weeds By-Law can be view through the link below: www.RichmondHill.ca/Grass-and-Weeds

## Launch, expand, or continue an invasive species removal program that will support the re-establishment of native habitat for monarch butterflies and other pollinators.

**What is the total acreage of land treated to remove invasive plants? Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.**

11.34 acres

**Please describe the extent of revisions or maintenance to invasive species removal programs, as well as the practices or techniques used to remove the invasive plants.**

Richmond Hill coordinates a Community Stewardship Partnership program with conservation organizations such as TRCA, LEAF, and Ontario Streams to increase the quantity and quality of native habitat within the city and give residents firsthand experience in conservation efforts. Volunteers were directed to help remove invasive species from 7 newly renaturalized sites. The city has also begun providing additional training to operations staff regarding invasive plant species. Staff have been taught how to ID the most aggressive, ecosystem-disrupting invasive species and how to properly remove them.

## Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

**Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.**

2023-Pollinator Habitat (12 x 10 in) Winter Sign [U435] PRESS_Page_1.jpg

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

1649

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

Richmond Hill has maintained the informational signs displayed at the Harmony Habitat and Millennium pollinator gardens. These signs let visitors know that these gardens were created specifically to provide necessary habitat to butterfly and bee species. They also bear the logos of Bee City Canada and the Mayor’s Monarch Pledge to denote the city’s certification by these organizations. The newly established Kids Right to Know Community Garden has also installed a new informational sign. This sign details the importance of

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pollinators to the development of local, sustainable agriculture. The city has permanent signage on how rain gardens contribute to pollinator habitat at Minthorn park, and has also developed additional temporary signage for Minthorn Park and the garden surrounding the Oak Ridges Branch of the public library. These latter signs will be installed each winter and removed in the spring. They explain to residents that the dead plant material within the garden has been left to provide winter pollinator habitat for insects, and provides a link to RichmondHill.ca/Pollinators for those seeking more information. Lastly, the City has updated their Richmond Hill Blooms sign to be two sided; one side shows the residents garden is part of the Richmond Hill Blooms garden recognition program, and the second side can be used in the winter to show the community that their garden has not been tidied as their garden is still providing habitat during the fall and winter.

## Increase the percentage of native plants, shrubs and trees that must be used in city landscaping ordinances and encourage use of milkweed, where appropriate.

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

• Public Works Operations (Urban Forestry, Natural Environment and Horticulture) • Infrastructure Delivery Services • Policy Planning (Sustainability, Parks and Natural Heritage Planning)

**What is the status of this action? Please limit your answer to either "complete" or "in progress" in the answer field below.**

Complete

**If this action is Complete, please include the date it was completed and share a 1-2 sentence description. Please include a copy of the policy by uploading or linking below.**

September 9th, 2023 saw Richmond Hill approve the latest amendment to the Official Plan (Policy 3.2.1.2.29) regarding land use within the city. The plan details the city’s continued commitment to increasing the percent of native plants, shrubs and trees used in city landscaping and encourages the use of milkweed where appropriate. The full text of the Official Plan can be viewed through the link below: www.RichmondHill.ca/Official-Plan

## Integrate monarch butterfly conservation into the city’s Park Master Plan, Sustainability Plan, Climate Resiliency Plan or other city plans.

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

• Public Works Operations (Park Services Infrastructure, Urban Forestry, Natural Environment and Horticulture) • Infrastructure Delivery Services • Policy Planning (Sustainability, Parks and Natural Heritage Planning)

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**What is the status of this action? Please limit your answer to either "complete" or "in progress" in the answer field below.**

Complete

**If this action is Complete, please include the date it was completed and share a 1-2 sentence description. Please include a copy of the policy by uploading or linking below.**

On July 6th, 2022, Richmond Hill updated our Environment Strategy to reflect the community's passion to protect, enhance, and restore its natural environment. The strategy defined 10 themes to guide the city's effort, one of which specifically concerns local food and pollinators. Our continued expansion of the Community Garden, Healthy Yards, and Richmond Hill Blooms programs is directly informed by the goals and guidelines put forth by the Environment Strategy. The full text of the updated Environment Strategy can be viewed through the link below: www.RichmondHill.ca/Environment-Strategy-Update

## Launch, expand, or continue one or more ordinances to reduce light pollution to benefit urban wildlife.

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

• By-law, Education, and Enforcement • Energy and Wast

**What is the status of this action? Please limit your answer to either "complete" or "in progress" in the answer field below.**

Complete

**If this action is Complete, please include the date it was completed and share a 1-2 sentence description. Please include a copy of the policy by uploading or linking below.**

Richmond Hill has had a light pollution by-law (No. 63-95) since 2007, with the latest update to the policy occurring on October 12th, 2021. The by-law regulates where outdoor lights may be installed, their illumination intensity, and hours of operation. The intensity of lighting can be adjusted remotely by location. As such, it can be reduced at times of day or for certain areas such as those in proximity to wildlife habitat. The full text of the light pollution by-law can be viewed through the link below: www.RichmondHill.ca/Light-Pollution

## 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?**

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• Burr House Community Garden • Forster Collective Garden • Gladys McLatchy Memorial Garden • Harmony Habitat Garden • Heritage Herb Centre Garden • Hill House Hospice Garden • Kids Right to Know Community Garden • Millennium Garden • Salvation Army (Sussex Community Garden) • David Suzuki Foundation

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

50

**Please describe your effort in completing this action.**

In 2025, Richmond Hill partnered with Miskwaadesi Studio, an urban Indigenous Community, to create a network of five Indigenous medicine gardens that will act as living classrooms, cultural gathering spaces, and provide important pollinator habitat. In addition to this, the Kids Right to Know Community Garden created a specific pollinator patch to educate residents and the community on the importance of pollinators, but also to help enhance their local gardening efforts. The Sussex vegetable garden held a fallow year to allow their community garden to regenerate with native pollinator species to help restore the soil before they continue to plant vegetables in 2026. These new gardens are a welcome addition to the existing pollinator gardens the city maintains. The canoe planter created at Mill Pond Park in partnership with the Richmond Hill Horticultural Society and David Suzuki Foundation in 2021 continues to bloom with black-eyed susan, butterfly milkweed, and hoary vervain in the spring and summer. Likewise the Harmony Habitat Garden, McConaghy Community Garden, Forster Collective Garden, Kids Right to Know and Millennium Garden have expanded their native perennial garden beds. The city has also made efforts to increase the amount of viable pollinator habitat at community vegetable gardens. More information on this program can be found through the link below: www.RichmondHill.ca/CommunityGardens https://www.richmondhill.ca/en/learn-more/indigenous-partnerships.aspx

## Plant or maintain a monarch and pollinator-friendly demonstration garden at City Hall or another prominent or culturally significant community location.

**Where is the demonstration garden located and how does this location relate to the cultural significance of the monarch (if relevant)? (Please provide an address or coordinates, if possible)**

In 2025, Richmond Hill partnered with Miskwaadesi Studio, an urban Indigenous Community, to create a network of five Indigenous medicine gardens that will act as living classrooms, cultural gathering spaces, and provide important pollinator habitat. Sites included: Richmond Hill Public Library Central Branch, Oak Ridges Community Centre, Phyllis Rawlinson Park, Richmond Green Park, and Hill House Hospice.

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

In 2025, Richmond Hill partnered with Miskwaadesi Studio, an urban Indigenous Community.

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**What is the size of the demonstration garden (in acres)? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 0.5 acres ). For reference, 1 acre = 43,560 square feet and is about the size of a football field without the end zones. Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.**

0.01

## Launch, expand, or continue an effort to change municipal planting ordinances and practices to include more native milkweed and native nectar producing plants at city properties.

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

**What is the status of this action? Please limit your answer to either "complete" or "in progress" in the answer field below.**

**If this action is Complete, please include the date it was completed and share a 1-2 sentence description. Please include a copy of the policy by uploading or linking below.**

**If this action is In Progress, please describe your progress and a target date when you plan to complete action.**

## Engage with developers, planners, landscape architects, and other community leaders and organizers engaged in planning processes to identify opportunities to create monarch habitat.

**Please describe the extent of engagement with these groups and associated opportunities to create monarch habitat.**

Through the City's development planning process, Park, Natural Heritage and Planning staff regularly work with proponents to incorporate pollinator plants within their landscape plans. In addition to this, the City's Sustainability Metrics Program has a metric dedicated to supporting pollinators (NE-6). The guidebook engages developers, planners, landscape architects, and other community leaders involved in land use planning to identify opportunities to create monarch habitat. One example is ensuring seed mixes used in naturalized portions of new developments include species crucial to the survival of at-risk pollinators such as butterfly milkweed, swamp milkweed, and New England Aster. The city considers new projects from developers, planners, landscape architects and others on a case-by-case basis and presents recommendations from the “Sustainability Metrics Program Guidebook 2024” where applicable.
https://www.richmondhill.ca/SustainabilityMetrics

## Launch or maintain an outdoor education program(s) (e.g., at schools, after-school programs, community centers and groups) that builds awareness and creates habitat by engaging students, educators, and the

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**community in planting native milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants (i.e., National Wildlife Federation's Schoolyard Habitats program and Monarch Mission curriculum).**

**Upload any relevant documents, images, or other attachments related to your effort on this action.**

HY Expansion Pilot_HTS_June 4 (20).jpg

**What program was launched or maintained to complete this effort? If you are involved with another National Wildlife Federation program, please mention that below. (Please include a link to the program, if possible)**

As part of the City's Healthy Yards Program, the City partnered with the Richmond Hill Garden and Horticultural Society to pilot an education and habitat creation project with a local Richmond Hill School. Two gardens were installed at one school in Richmond Hill, Holy Trinity School.

**How many schools, community groups, leaders, or centers were engaged in this effort? How many of these collaborations and partnerships are "new"? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)**

2

**Please list the names of the schools you are working with.**

Holy Trinity School

**What resources, if any, are you providing to educators?**

The Richmond Hill Garden and Horticultural Society provided a presentation on the importance of native species, bloom time and garden design. In addition, teachers and students were provided native pollinator seeds to take home.

**How many students and educators would you estimate are being reached? Please limit your answer to only number of adults and youths engaged in the answer field (e.g., 200 students and 20 educators).**

40 students, 2 educators

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

Richmond Hill Garden and Horticultural Society

**How many acres of monarch and pollinator habitat have been planted through this effort? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below**

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**(e.g., 0.5 acres). For reference, 1 acre = 43,560 square feet and is about the size of a football field without the end zones. Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.**

0.01

**What is the maintenance schedule to ensure planted habitat is maintained?**

Teachers are responsible for watering the garden throughout the year, and students will be engaged to tend the garden in the spring and fall when they return to school.

## Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

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

1010

**What species were collected or propagated?**

• Swamp milkweed • Butterfly milkweed • Prairie blazing star • Ox-eye sunflower • Purple prairie clover • Ironweed

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

• Richmond Hill Public Library • Richmond Hill Garden & Horticultural Society

**Please describe the milkweed seed collection and propagation effort that you hosted.**

The City of Richmond Hill creates seed packets with native wildflower seeds, including common milkweed and butterfly milkweed seeds, and distributes them at a variety of events to encourage and support the planting of pollinator species. These seed packets also include other important nectaring plants such as blazing star, ironweed, ox-eye sunflower, and purple prairie clover. In 2025, over 500 seed packets were distributed to community members.

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