City of Gastonia

Gastonia, NC

Mayor Richard Franks

Pledge Summary

The City of Gastonia is committed to monarch and pollinator conservation and has been a Bee City USA affiliate since 2018. Through Keep Gastonia Beautiful, the City supports pollinator-friendly practices, public education, and habitat enhancement. In 2026, Gastonia is partnering with community gardens and Master Gardener Volunteers to grow and install additional milkweed and native nectar plants at key public locations to support monarch breeding and migration. These efforts reflect a strong, ongoing commitment to protecting pollinators through community partnerships and sustainable land stewardship.

Action Items Committed for 2026

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.
- 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

- Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.
- Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Richard Franks	2026	1/27/2026	
Mayor Richard Frank	2025	1/8/2025	Signatories
Mayor Richard Franks	2024	12/7/2023	Signatories
Mayor Walker E. Reid	2023	1/24/2023	Signatories
Mayor Walker Reid	2022	3/9/2022	Signatories

Action Items

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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.

2 Community Gardens, a church, YMCA, Farmers Market, Martha Rivers Park

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 16, 2026

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

National Pollinator Week

Upload a copy of your proclamation.

2026 Proclamation Pollinator Week.pdf

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.

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

IMG_7990.jpeg

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

IMG_7997.jpeg

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

IMG_8041.jpeg

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

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IMG_8046.jpeg

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

NC Extension office Master Gardener Volunteers Keep Gastonia Beautiful volunteers and staff City of Gastonia Parks and Recreation Staff

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

Keep Gastonia Beautiful recently teamed up with our incredible Master Gardener Volunteers to give monarch butterflies a helping hand by planting 196 milkweed plants across Gastonia! Master Gardener Volunteers started by germinating over 900 milkweeds from seeds. A dedicated group worked hard to grow 500 milkweeds to be planted. While we directly supported plantings at the locations listed below, the group did get all 500 planted at other locations such as the YMCA, at another community garden, at Gaston Day School and a few other locations, ensuring that at least 40 were at each location. 83 milkweed plants at Martha Rivers Park 103 milkweed plants at the Gastonia Farmers Market 10 milkweed plants at the Aunt Charlotte Community Garden During the great pollinator census we will have an educational table at the Gastonia Farmers Market and areas where people can count pollinators and submit that back to us.

Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

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

55

What species were collected or propagated?

Showy Milkweed, Common Milkweed

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

NC Extension Office Master Gardener Volunteers

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

We co-sponsored this growing event by providing soil and collecting pots for the germination stage. The MG Volunteers were the true heroes, taking the seeds from germination to seedlings over the winter. We then identified 3 locations for them to plant the milkweed and did all the bed prep, provided extra soil, mulch and provided educational signage. This was an organized effort: Initial meeting took place Thursday, January 29th, at the Gaston County Cooperative Extension office (1303 Dallas Cherryville Hwy, Dallas, NC 28034) in Room B. Two session times: 2:00 PM or 6:00 PM. Attendance is required. While we hope to provide a Zoom link, we encourage everyone to attend in person for instructions and Q&A. February 12: Stratification begins. A small group handled this

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process, but everyone received instructions. March 12 and/or 14 (2:00 PM): Potting seeds at the Cooperative Extension greenhouse. Multiple session options will be available for sign-up. Week of May 9: Planting will begin

Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

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

FM Monarch bed.jpg

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

Martha Rivers Monarch Bed.jpg

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

Rotary Garden pic.jpg

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

Pollinator Custom signs.png

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

8

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

Monarch specific signs are located at all beds created this year and existing beds from last year. Signs were purchased from Monarch Watch https://shop.monarchwatch.org/product/Monarch-Waystation-Sign/125618 1. Martha Rivers Park - this also has a custom sign that leads people with a QR code to our resource page 2. Gastonia Farmers Market - this also has a Bee City USA sign and a custom sign that leads people with a QR to our resource page 3. Highland Community Garden - Monarch Wayfinding sign 4. Gaston Day School - pollinator bed with Monarch Wayfinding sign 5. Pisgah ARP Church - Monarch Wayfinding sign 6. Warlick YMCA - Monarch Wayfinding sign 7. Covenant Village - Monarch Wayfinding Sign 8. Rotary Community Garden - Butterfly Highway and Monarch Wayfinding sign

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