City of Columbus

Columbus, OH

Mayor Andrew Ginther

Pledge Summary

Columbus is Ohio's capital and largest city with a population of 907,971 and covers 226 square miles. With over 400 parks and many pollinator habitats of varying sizes, Columbus is committed to saving the monarch butterfly and other pollinators by signing the Mayor's Monarch Pledge. Columbus continues its resident engagement through the city in promoting pollinator habitats that benefit the monarch butterfly.

Action Items Committed for 2024

Communications and Convening

- 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 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.
- Create a community-driven educational conservation strategy, initiative, or practice that focuses on and benefits local, underserved residents.
- Create a community art project to enhance and promote monarch and pollinator conservation as well as cultural awareness and recognition.
- 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 pollinator-friendly native nectar plants (i.e., National Wildlife Federation's Schoolyard Habitats program and Monarch Mission curriculum).

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- 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.
- Host or support a monarch butterfly festival that is accessible to all residents in the community and promotes monarch and pollinator conservation, as well as cultural awareness and recognition.
- Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

Past Pledge Archive

Mayor Name	Program Year	Pledge Date	Achievement
Mayor Andrew Ginther	2026	2/23/2026	
Mayor Andrew Ginther	2025	2/21/2025	Leadership Circle
Mayor Andrew Ginther	2024	3/29/2024	Leadership Circle
Mayor Andrew J. Ginther	2023	2/6/2023	Signatories
Mr. Andrew Ginther	2022	12/23/2021	Signatories
Mayor Andrew J. Ginther	2021	2/4/2021	Signatories

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.).

17500

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.)

750

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.

.05

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.

Two habitats were created, both in public City of Columbus Recreation and Parks Dept. Parks.

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

Columbus Recreation and Parks plans events in parks in low income communities and communities of color to engage in pollinator maintenance events. Franklin County Soil and Water Conservation District holds several workshops in marginalized communities to engage in the benefits of planting natives.

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

Demonstrating that native plants; especially milkweed, is critical for healthy habitat and community.

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?

Resources that have been the most helpful so far come from the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and the Ohio Department of Transportation pollinator recommendations. New resources that I would like to see that would be useful is more recent studies of pollinator habitat implementation in urban cities.

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

CRPD launched a Conservation Stewardship Program to engage passionate community members to participate in independent volunteer work within our pollinator habitats. From this program, community members were able to meet new people and make a difference at their local pollinator habitat. Franklin County also created a new pollinator advocacy group called Franklin County Pollinator Pathways.

Selected Action Items

Create a community art project to enhance and promote monarch and pollinator conservation as well as cultural awareness and recognition.

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

How many individuals were engaged in this effort? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only, e.g. 50).

Please describe the community art project that was implemented in your community and how it contributed to cultural awareness and recognition (e.g., number of art installations, type of art).

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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.

Protect Pollinators.pdf

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

Pollinator Rackcard 4.17.pdf

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

Columbus Recreation and Parks Department (CRPD) created pollinator printed materials to hand out at community events. CRPD also has an active instagram with 11,300 followers, they uploaded posts regarding pollinators such as promoting pollinator habitat maintenance activities and events and also promoting our pollinator documentation program. CRPD also featured pollinators in our external newsletter. Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District (FSWCD) has a monthly e-newsletter and sent 1,629 Columbus residents were sent an April newsletter featuring pollinators. FSWCD also as a bi-annual e-mail and mailed general newsletter where 1,498 Columbus residents were sent the Spring e-newsletter and 4,174 residents were mailed the Spring printed newsletter.

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.

One of CRPD's newly added pollinator habitats at Sharon Meadows park features native milkweed and both Sharon Meadows Park and Brevoort Park planted nectar producing plants. CRPD also planted 80 pollinator promoting shrubs at Frank's Park this year to attract a wider variety of pollinators. Franklin Park Conservatory (FPC) has the Growing To Green Program, our community garden resource program, engaged routinely with approximately 40 community gardens in 2024. We connected with an additional 150 community gardens in 2023, but didn't experience repeated interaction with those gardens this year. October 10, 2024 community member near St. Dominic's Catholic Church reached out for advice on an open lot that is not serving any purpose for the community. The area is overrun with invasive weeds and is visually unappealing. We had a conversation that led to considering a native species and pollinator garden as a potential solution.

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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.

25 community organizations and groups participated.

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

FSWCD supports native plant grant projects implemented with the City of Columbus funding through FSWCD via our business rebates program funded by Department of Public Utilities for stormwater runoff reduction purposes. 10 projects were awarded a Community Backyards Business Rebate Grant in April 2024. The grant provides up to $2,500 reimbursement for native plants and green infrastructure projects for local businesses and nonprofits located within the City of Columbus. As of 10/30/2024, 2 projects were near completion, but no projects have been officially completed yet. FSWCD also supports a technical assistance provided for HOAs, Community Associations, and neighborhood associations. FSWCD attended the Frankltinton Area Neighbors Association and presented on the community backyards native plant rebate program and promoted Franklinton workshops. Lastly, FSWCD also had 11 Columbus residents who participated in the in-person Master Rain Gardener course held in Setpember and an additional 7 are registered for the fall online course happening in November-December.

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.

CRPD Conservation Section engages with our Design and construction section to implement pollinator habitats in newly developed parks. Two redeveloping parks will include pollinator habitats, specifically at Kilbourne Run Sports Park and Mifflin Park. CRPD also engages with external parties on adjacent properties to incorporate pollinator habitats such as current development of the Barnett Columbus Metropolitan Library which is adjacent to our Barnett Community Center to potentially have a pollinator habitat.

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.

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FSWCD has native plant outreach and classes reaching Columbus underserved areas via the IMPACT Community Advocates. FSWCD met with 5 IMPACT Community Advocates and staff twice in March 2024 to train them on native plants and water quality information to share with their residents. Additionally, we presented a Community Backyards native plant workshop on 4/30/2024 to 22 IMPACT Community Action staff as a lunch and learn event for their staff. Provided IMPACT Community Action with 40 Community Backyards native plant rebate program signs to disperse in their Advocate Communities (American Addition, Southside, Linden and Hilltop/Franklinton).

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?

Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed and Franklin County Pollinator Pathway

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

200

Please describe your effort in completing this action.

CRPD had two new pollinator habitats created in 2024 with the help of Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed to maintain these two spaces. CRPD also planted shrubs to revitalize an existing pollinator habitat at Frank's Park

Display educational signage at monarch gardens and pollinator habitat.

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

2022_PollinatorSignage_PrintReady_Art.jpg

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

10

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

The educational signage explains what a pollinator is and ways people can help pollinators in their very own yard! The sign also includes species of plants and pollinators.

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

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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.

5.36

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.

Revisions or maintenance to invasive species removal programs included the development of the conservation stewardship program focusing on pollinator habitat maintenance in response to the need and interest from our volunteer science program called the pollinator documentation program. We also partnered with Franklin County MetroParks to conduct a prescribed burn as maintenance at one of our pollinator habitat prairie. Practices and techniques used to remove the invasive plants was by hand removal such as loppers, handsaws, spades, soil knives, and herbicide application by licensed staff to cut tree/ shrub stumps.

Facilitate or support a milkweed seed collection and propagation effort.

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

20

What species were collected or propagated?

Common Milkweed

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

Local conservation district Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District, a statewide nonprofit Ohio Pollinator Habitat Initiative, and state agency Ohio Department of Transportation.

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

Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District (FSWCD) partnered with the Ohio Pollinator Habitat Initiative to collect common milkweed seed pods in October. These seeds are collected annually in the fall and given to Ohio Pollinator Habitat Initiative (OPHI) to be planted by Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) on ODOT property along highways and roads. This initiative creates more habitat, improves existing habitat, and reduces mowing costs and emissions. The collection drive bin was accessible 24/7 at Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District’s office from October 1 – October 31. It was posted on social media by FSWCD. The seeds were picked up by OPHI in early November. OPHI will work with ODOT to process and plant the seeds.

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Host or support a monarch butterfly festival that is accessible to all residents in the community and promotes monarch and pollinator conservation, as well as cultural awareness and recognition.

How many estimated individuals attended the event? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field ((Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only), e.g. 500)

500

What was the date of your festival?

June 22, 2024

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

We had 67 pollinator-related booths, and vendors educating people on pollinators

Please describe the details of your monarch butterfly festival and how you ensured the event was accessible by all residents in the community (e.g., events, length, notable successes, outreach, location).

It's a free public event that has taken place at Franklin Park Conservatory Community Garden Campus every year (the last weekend of National Pollinator's Week) for about 10 years. Both neighborhoods that border FFPC have come to expect and anticipate the festival every year. We advertise the festival employing the same marketing avenues as all of our other events; including posted signage in the Main Building to create anticipation. We have a longstanding relationship with the Franklin Park Neighborhood Civic Association. They also help us with advertising by word of mouth. We encourage the vendors to market their appearance at the festival as they deem fit for their organization. The other benefit of having this outdoor event is it takes place along the paved walking paths (formerly carriage paths). The paths are wide enough to allow people with different abilities to maneuver through the crowd and still approach the vendor tables. Multiple vendors were giving away native seeds for free. The seed swap was free, and the 2 native pollinator plant sale vendors were offering plants at drastically reduced costs in an effort to make them as affordable as possible to those who prefer plants over seeds. There are 3 food trucks at the festival each year, which are chef-owned and the festival organizer makes an effort to pick food trucks that offer something for everyone, vegan, vegetarian, gluten-free, dairy-free, and/or nut-free. We also invite Too Good Eats to the festival every year. They're a small family-owned business in the 43205 that produces artisan popsicles made from local urban farmed fruits and vegetables. We try to keep the festival community focused and open to all. There is a bus stop on Broad St in front of the Conservatory. Unfortunately, there isn't a bus stop on Franklin Park S, which is the road closest to the Community Garden Campus. But we do see a lot of people walking and on bikes coming to the festival.

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

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

687

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

1727

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

Community backyards rebate program engages all residents of Franklin County to participate.

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)

Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens is a cultural institution and demonstration garden. Our property is approximately 20 acres, with over 700 different plant species and two acres of food crops. Our interior biomes include indigenous plants with significant cultural importance to the Himalayan Mountain region (representing 7 nations), the Amazon, the Sonoran Dessert, and various Pacific Islands. In The Scott's Miracle-Gro Children's Garden, there's a rain garden and a recreated pollywog pond, both include natives.

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

Franklin Park Conservatory is open to all.

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.

2.5

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 pollinator-friendly native

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nectar plants (i.e., National Wildlife Federation's Schoolyard Habitats program and Monarch Mission curriculum).

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)

FSWCD has 191 Columbus teachers on our teacher e-newsletter list which received plant messaging and activities for students. CRPD has an Outdoor Recreation and Education Program that highlights pollinator habitats and native plants. For the past two years CRPD has participated in the Teen Eco Summit at the Columbus Zoo at engages high schoolers to implement sustainable practices at their school. CRPD came with an activity to promote creating pollinator habitats at their schools.

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)

250

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

Schools in Central Ohio and beyond.

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

teacher e-newsletter with native plant messaging

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).

825 students and 614 adults

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

Teachers from different schools and passionate students

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 (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

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

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Columbus Recreation and Parks Department as multiple volunteer events a year regarding pollinator habitat maintenance and we also have conservation stewardship program dedicated to maintaining pollinator habitats. This includes work like reseeding, planting plugs and shrubs, and invasive removals.

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