# City of Columbus

Columbus, OH

Mayor Andrew Ginther

## Pledge Summary

Columbus is Ohio's capital and largest city with a population of 913,175 and covers 226 square miles. Columbus Recreation and Parks Department has 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. Columbus Recreation and Parks Department, Franklin Park Conservatory, Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District, and Sustainable Columbus are spearheading Pollinator Conservation in Columbus along with the help of many local nonprofits.

## Action Items Committed for 2025

### 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.
- Engage with developers, planners, landscape architects, and other community leaders and organizers engaged in planning processes to identify opportunities to create monarch habitat.
- Create a community-driven educational conservation strategy, initiative, or practice that focuses on and benefits local, underserved residents.

### 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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- Host or support a monarch neighborhood challenge to engage neighborhoods and homeowners' associations within the community to increase awareness, support community unity around a common mission, and/or create habitat for the monarch butterfly.
- 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.)**

500

**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**

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**public spaces, and more.**

On habitat was created and two are in the process of being created on City public land.

**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.

**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

### 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.**

### 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.

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

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

## 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.**

## 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).

**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)**

**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)**

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

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

**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).**

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

**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.**

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

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## Host or support a monarch neighborhood challenge to engage neighborhoods and homeowners' associations within the community to increase awareness, support community unity around a common mission, and/or create habitat for the monarch butterfly.

**How many estimated individuals participated in your challenge? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only, e.g. 100).**

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

**When did this challenge take place?**

**What is the total acreage of habitat created? Please limit your answer to only the number of acres in the answer field below (e.g., 2 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.**

**Please describe your challenge and the results.**

## 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 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) frequently tables at community events and we have a specific pollinator hand-out to promote visiting our 37 pollinator habitats throughout the city, volunteering at our habitats, and the benefits of pollinators. CRPD also has an external newsletter for National Pollinator Week. 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.

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

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

Columbus Recreation and Parks Department is continually working on installing a pollinator habitat at Mifflin Park through a playground project. CRPD also collaborated with the Southeast Lions Club to install a pollinator habitat at Southeast Lions Park.

## 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)**

v. The Franklin Park Conservatory's Outreach Educator passed out pollinator seed mix at 13 outreaches. Gave away ¾ of an acre to approximately 2,550 people. The seed mix included common milkweed along with other native wildflowers like purple coneflower, wild bergamot, black eyed Susan and more.

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

2550

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

Community Members

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

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

40

**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?**

Guests of the Children's Garden

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

i. Children's Garden staff at the Franklin Park Conservatory collected milkweed seeds from the plants that grow in the Children's Garden. They distributed the seeds to guests who visited the Children's Garden to plant in their home gardens. Approximately 40 guests

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received free seeds. Seeds that weren't taken by guests will be used in our Garden Club programming next growing season

## 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?**

Community Members, Scioto Watershed Action Group

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

330

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

CRPD planted 330 plugs at two different pollinator habitats this year as well as native seeds. The Franklin Park Conservatory's Growing to Green Program is the largest organized effort dedicated to supporting and sustaining urban agriculture in the state of Ohio. While vegetables aren't often thought of as pollinator-friendly, they do provide nectar for many pollinators. Some of the community gardens the program works with will plant native plants around the community garden to encourage pollination of the vegetable plants. Growing to Green visited 24 community gardens and 1,200 community gardeners. The program also offers a free, monthly educational series that teaches people about growing vegetables, including the importance of companion planting, incorporating native plants, and putting the garden to bed with pollinators in mind.

## 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.**

25 acres of invasives

**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.**

Columbus Recreation and Parks Department has a robust conservation volunteer program where we hold invasive species removal events where volunteers utilize handtools such as loppers spades, soil knives, and pruners to remove invasives. CRPD also maintained our Conservation Stewardship Program focusing on pollinator habitat natural resource management where volunteers remove invasives and weeds specifically within our pollinator habitats

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## 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.

## 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)**

550

**What was the date of your festival?**

June 21, 2025

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

Franklin County Pollinator Pathway, Columbus Recreation and Parks Dept, Ohio State University, Ohio Dept of Natural Resources, and more!

**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).**

i. On June 21, 2025, Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens closed National Pollinator Week with Pollinator Palooza. A community event, filled with hands-on learning opportunities, crafts, food, music, native plants, and more. The event celebrates pollinators and highlights the important services they provide us and their role in nature. The event is 11am-3pm. This year, despite the excessive heat, 550 people were in attendance along

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with 50 educational tables, vendors, and activities. ii. iii. In conjunction with Pollinator Palooza, Franklin Park Conservatory hosted The Flutter Run 5K the morning of June 21st, which included a plant giveaway for pollinator-friendly herbs. Despite the excessive heat, 285 people attended the 5k.

## 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)

i. Franklin Park Conservatory and Botanical Gardens is located 2 miles east of the State Capitol building in an urban area right outside downtown Columbus, Ohio. It's in an area where there are very few flowering plants; we act as a plant bridge for monarchs during the great migration and are a journey's end for returning monarchs because of the abundant nectar and milkweed. ii. iii. Our campus covers 40 acres, and we served 355,314 visitors in 2024. We're known as a demonstration and cultural garden and conservatory. We use concepts like companion planting, rain gardens, composting, incorporating native species in formal landscape design, pollinator gardens, and two living roofs on our campus. Not only are these concepts people can see in action, but we have classes for people to learn how they can practice these concepts at home. iv. v. We're also a cultural institution. The historic John F. Wolfe Palm House is one of 5 Victorian glasshouses in the U.S. In modern-day Columbus, our glasshouse symbolizes scientific knowledge of the natural world, discovery, respite, family, diversity, and inclusivity. Inside our main building are 5 biomes representing natural landscapes from 5 large geographic regions: the rainforest, a semi-arid desert, the Himalayan Mountains, and island tropics. Within each biome are rare, endangered, religious, and culturally significant plants, which are special to the ethnic groups from these regions that now call Columbus home. Additionally, our Bonsai Courtyard is a meditative space among plants native to Japan. One such plant is the Kaki tree. It was given to us in 1996. The Kaki survived the 1945 bombing of Nagasaki, Japan. We harvest the seeds from the fruit every year and send some seeds back to Japan. The remainder go to the Japan-American Society of Central Ohio (JASCO). This is a symbolic gesture of community, international peace, and the preservation of history. JASCO has helped the Conservatory plant more than a dozen Cherry Blossom trees on-site, and the Conservatory hosts their free annual cultural festival, which attracts 4,000 people. These are just a few brief examples of how we're a cultural institution.

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

NA

### 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.

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