# Lexington Fayette Urban County Government

Lexington, KY

Mayor Linda Gorton

## Pledge Summary

The city of Lexington is the second largest city in the state of Kentucky and is a merged city-county government that serves the citizens of Lexington and Fayette County. Lexington has made a commitment to protecting, creating, and preserving Monarch Butterfly habitat throughout our community by supporting the Mayor's Monarch Pledge and other initiatives. Lexington is a vibrant and diverse community with many groups that will play a vital role in helping us achieve our goals through the Mayors Monarch Pledge.

## Action Items Committed for 2021

### 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.
- 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.
- Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.

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- 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).
- Initiate or support community science (or citizen science) efforts that help monitor monarch migration and health.
- 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

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

## Past Pledge Archive

| Mayor Name | Program Year | Pledge Date | Achievement |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mayor Linda Gorton | 2026 | 12/23/2025 | |
| Mayor Linda Gorton | 2025 | 1/22/2025 | Leadership Circle |
| Mayor Linda Gorton | 2024 | 1/22/2024 | Leadership Circle |
| Mayor Linda Gorton | 2023 | 2/3/2023 | Leadership Circle |
| Mayor Linda Gorton | 2022 | 1/31/2022 | Leadership Circle |
| Mayor Linda Gorton | 2021 | 2/8/2021 | 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.).**

500

**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.)**

200

**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.**

5

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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.**

Habitat is being created in various locations across our community. Private citizens have created habitat at their homes and larger habitats have been created.

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

Native habitats are being created in parks and community spaces in communities through out our city which includes low income communities and communities of color. Our goal is to continue to engage these populations and work with these citizens to improve the habitats they are helping to create.

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

Lexington is a community that is deeply connected to the natural world around us. We're known as the Horse Capital of the World and we refer to our region as the Bluegrass, the connection to the natural lands around our city is what gives this area a unique identity. We want to continue to encourage our citizens to love nature and be stewards of this magnificent land we have been gifted.

**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?**

If there are any grant opportunities or marketing materials that are available to promote monarch initiatives that would be helpful.

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

Many community engagement activities that we hoped to do ended up being cancelled due to covid 19 and restrictions that were put in place. We are hopeful that these programs will be offered in 2022.

## 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:**

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

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

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

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

## 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.**

Lexington Parks and Recreation regularly looks for opportunities to incorporate pollinator habitat into park management and design. This year the Division of Parks began educating the public about a new program called Bring Back the Bluegrass, which will take areas within existing parks and convert them from turf grass to native habitats which include short and tall prairies. Milkweed will be planted in these locations to encourage the creation of Monarch Habitat. https://www.lexingtonky.gov/bring-back-bluegrass

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

This program was created by and managed by Lexington Parks and Recreation Natural Areas Section. All education, volunteer coordination, and implementation of the new habitats will be performed by Lexington Parks and Recreation staff.

## 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.**

Master Naturalists Master Gardeners Wild Ones Natural Landscapers - Lexington Chapter North American Butterfly Association - Lexington Chapter Flora Cliff Nature Sanctuary Rotary Club of the Bluegrass

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

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Master Naturalist / Master Gardeners are currently installing a new meadow within a Lexington Park that will include milkweeds and interpretive signage. Wild Ones is currently doing regular volunteer work weekly at Hisle Farm Park to remove invasive plant species from meadow areas and to install native plants such as milkweed. This group also maintains many Monarch Waystations around Lexington. NABA - Lexington Chapter has been involved with garden monitoring at city owned golf courses as well as planning of future workshops and events. Flora Cliff Nature Sanctuary organizes and partners with the Park Naturalist at Raven Run to do a pollinator Bio Blitz. The Rotary Club of the Bluegrass has adopted a Bring Back the Bluegrass site that will be converted to a short prairie and will include milkweeds.

## 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)**

200 packets of Common Milkweed seeds were given out, between 1-2 dozen seeds per pack. Approximately, 2,400-4,800 seeds.

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

200

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

The seeds were given away at McConnell Springs park and Raven Run Nature Sanctuary during an event called Nature Hop. https://www.lexingtonky.gov/NatureHop

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

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

SeedSavingBrochure4.2.pdf

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

10

**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?**

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Lexington Parks and Recreation Natural Areas Staff, the Friends of McConnell Springs, Muzem, The Fayette County Conservation Disctrict

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

Park staffs at McConnell Springs and Raven Run Nature Sanctuary collected milkweed seeds from 3 locations in Lexington Parks Natural Areas. Those seeds were sorted into envelopes and given out during several programs such as the Nature Hop event. Some seeds were kept at those two parks and are being propagated by Park staff for future plantings. The Friends of McConnell Springs received a grant from the Fayette County Conservation District to support a program called "Grow Our Own". The program was proposed as a native seed propagation effort, park staff has collected native seeds from Common Milkweed and other wildflowers. Those seeds are being grown and prepared for a native plant give away in 2022. A brochure was created by Lexington Parks staff to promote the program and educate the public on the importance of native plants.

## 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.**

Screenshot 2021-11-29 140107.jpg

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

No Mow Natural Areas_Brochure copy 2 (1).pdf

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

Live Green Lexington promoted the importance of Milkweeds in gardens for Monarch Butterflies in their Spring 2021 Newsletter that was distributed to thousands of members of our community, see page 5 of attachment. Live Green Lexington and Lexington Parks and Recreation, both part of the Lexington Fayette Urban County Government, promoted the importance of monarch gardens through their various social media accounts. Other promotional materials that were created that will be mentioned in other action items as well include a publication for Bring Back the Bluegrass and Grow Our Own. Attachments would not upload but information about these programs can be found at https://www.lexingtonky.gov/livegreen and https://www.lexingtonky.gov/sites/default/files/2019-05/No%20Mow%20Natural%20Areas_Brochure%20copy%202.pdf

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

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

Griffingateslide.pptx

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

BringBackTheBluegrass_CouncilDistrict#4.pdf

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

Lexington Parks and Recreation Natural Areas staff have had multiple meetings with garden and neighborhood groups to educate them on the importance of native plants in gardening. Jennifer Hubbard-Sanchez, Natural Areas Superintendent, has made multiple presentations to community groups about the Bring Back the Bluegrass program and why planting native plants is a priority. Steven Rogers, Recreation Manager, presented to the Griffin Gate Neighborhood by invitation from the neighborhood association's Garden Committee about the importance of Native Plants that were installed in their common areas. Files would not upload but they included the power point presentation that Steven presented.

## Initiate or support community science (or citizen science) efforts that help monitor monarch migration and health.

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

BioPoster.jpg

**How many estimated individuals participated in your community science effort? Please limit your answer to only the number of individuals reached in the answer field (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only, e.g. 150).**

15

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

National Recreation and Parks Association

**Please describe the community science program that you supported or initiated. Provide a link to any relevant programs, if possible.**

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McConnell Springs Participated in the Parks for Pollinators Bio Blitz in September 2021 which was organized by NRPA. The event had issues with iNaturalist not recording sightings but visitors still participated in a guided pollinator search through the park looking for and identifying pollinators. Lexington Parks and Recreation was also a partner in hosting the City Nature Challenge that was organized by the Floracliff Nature Sanctuary. This event was a city wide iNaturalist event that encourage citizens to record any evidence of wildlife including pollinators.

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

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

NaturalAreasVolunteerProgram_Proposal2021.docx

**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.**

Lexington Parks and Recreation has created called the Natural Area Stewardship Program to train and educate volunteers to in our natural area parks. The goal of the program is to create a cohort of regular volunteers that will work to lead environmental education programs with the public and improve natural habitats. The trainings would be held over six weeks with Lexington Parks staff. Attached is the entire program outline that discusses the course structure, goals, and other important factors. The program was scheduled for fall of 2021 and had 15 participants registered but had to be put on hold until 2022 due to a rise in covid19 cases in our state at that time.

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

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

No Mow Natural Areas_Brochure copy 2 (1).pdf

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

15+

**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.**

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Invasive species in LFUCG maintained properties are removed through various methods which depend on the species being removed, the ability of the worker, the environment, and weather conditions. Mechanical techniques are used if possible to remove the invasive plants. Herbicides are only used by city officials and volunteers that have a current Pesticide Applicators License and have been trained to use the appropriate chemicals and equipment. Products like glyphosate and Roundup are not being used by Lexington Park and Recreation staff any longer and herbicides are not used in environmentally sensitive areas or when flowers are blooming.

## 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?**

Lexington Parks and Recreation

**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.**

2018

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

Parks Master Plan Section 6.7.4 Monarch Conservation In order to accomplish the Mayor's Monarch Pledge, the city of Lexington has committed to taking a series of actions intended to save the monarch butterfly. Potential actions include: Remove milkweed from the list of noxious plants in the city's weed/landscape ordinance. Change weed and mowing ordinance to allow for native prairie and plant habitats. Increase the percentage of native plants used in the city. Adopt pesticide practices that are not harmful to pollinators. For the full master plan please see: https://www.lexingtonky.gov/about-parks-and-recreation-master-plan

## 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)**

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Native plants such as Purple Cone Flower and Brown Eyed Suzan were incorporated into the landscape plans for Main Street and Vine Street in Down Town Lexington this year. Purple Cone flower was voted as the official city flower of Lexington and as such it was featured in landscaped area near the LFUCG Government Center as well as many other highly visible locations. Milkweeds will be incorporated into landscape plans for 2022 in some of these locations as well.

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

Lexington Parks Landscaping

**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.**

1

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

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

0

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

existing signage is in place but no new signage has been installed.

## 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?**

0

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

0

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

A program called Plant by Numbers was created by Lexington's Division of Environmental Services that gives residents a step by step guide to creating a native garden in their

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home. Native plants such as milkweed are encouraged and listed in the plan. Residents can choose a garden plan based on the the type of planting location. This program has been used in residential areas and community demonstration gardens have been installed by citizens as well. https://www.lexingtonky.gov/plant-numbers-0

## Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.

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

20210708_102533.jpg

**Where are the medians, roadsides and public rights-of-way? (Please provide an address or coordinates, if possible, or describe the location)**

The roadside along Leestown Road at the front of Masterson Station Park was converted to a pollinator habitat. This was planted over a gas line right of way along the road way to create a scenic entrance to the park. Native wildflowers were planted near the intersection of Oliver Lewis Way and Versailles Road to enhance the beauty of the site. Native plants and trees are planted regularly in medians in city maintained streets and roads as part of our cities commitment to improving the quality of life for our citizens.

**How many milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants were planted? (Enter WHOLE NUMBERS only)**

0

**What is the total acreage of median and public right-of-way that has been planted with milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants? Note: 1 acre = roughly the size of a football field.**

5-10

**Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.**

City crews regularly maintain plantings in medians and right of ways as part of their regular tasks so these areas are being constantly maintained. The pollinator garden at Masterson Station Park was installed by Columbia Gas and is maintained by a contractor on a monthly basis.

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