Municipality of Leamington

Leamington, ON

Mayor Hilda MacDonald

Pledge Summary

The Municipality of Leamington is located in southwestern Ontario, Canada. Leamington is home to Point Pelee National Park, an essential annual stopover for migrating monarchs. Beginning in 2015, the Municipality of Leamington partnered with Point Pelee National Park to install monarch habitat in plant beds along 2 km of a popular existing trail. Officially named “The Leamington Monarch Trail,” it is a milkweed and nectar habitat installation which includes trilingual interpretive signage (English, French and Spanish) to communicate the importance of monarch habitat to the conservation of the species. Thanks to the enthusiasm of over 250 volunteers, this project swiftly saw success, with monarch caterpillars observed on the habitat within three months of the initial planting. Leamington is dedicated to the preservation of monarchs and pollinators, evidenced by our adoption of the Mayors’ Monarch Pledge, and we're excited to continue expanding these efforts for years to come.

Action Items Committed for 2024

Communications and Convening

- 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.

Program and Demonstration Gardens

- Plant milkweed and pollinator-friendly native nectar plants along roadsides, medians, or public rights-of-way.
- 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 Hilda MacDonald	2024	3/28/2024	

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.

Our Public Works team continues to plant pollinators along Leamington's municipal trail network.

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

The Municipality of Leamington's motivation for taking and continuing to work on the Mayors' Monarch Pledge stems from our commitment to environmental stewardship, biodiversity, and community engagement. As the southernmost point in mainland Canada, Leamington is uniquely positioned as a critical waypoint for monarch butterflies during their migration. Recognizing our responsibility to support this iconic species, we launched impactful projects such as "The Leamington Monarch Trail" in 2015, in partnership with Point Pelee National Park. This initiative transformed 18 plant beds along 2 km of a popular trail into a thriving milkweed and nectar habitat. The swift success of this project—marked by monarch caterpillars appearing within just three months of planting—galvanized our community. The involvement of over 250 dedicated volunteers showcased the deep commitment of our residents to conservation and reinforced our belief in the importance of collaborative environmental action. Our work on the Mayors' Monarch Pledge is driven by the understanding that preserving monarch butterflies is not only about protecting a species but also about maintaining the health of our broader ecosystem. By installing trilingual interpretive signage (English, French, and Spanish), we ensure that this message reaches Leamington's diverse population, fostering inclusivity and widespread support for conservation. Continuing our efforts under the Mayors' Monarch Pledge is a natural extension of these early successes. It aligns with our values of sustainability, community engagement, and education. Leamington remains steadfast in its commitment to creating and maintaining habitats, raising awareness, and empowering residents to contribute to the conservation of monarch butterflies for generations to come.

Selected Action Items

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?

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.

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

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.

Three community organizations participated including the Municipality of Leamington, the Leamington Horticultural Society and the Leamington 150 Anniversary Committee.

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

In a collaborative effort to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Leamington and the 75th anniversary of the Leamington Horticultural Society, the Leamington 150 Anniversary Committee, in partnership with the Leamington Horticultural Society and the Municipality of Leamington, undertook a significant ecological initiative to enhance the local environment and support monarch butterflies. This project involved planting 500 native trees and shrubs at Mersea Park in Leamington using the Miyawaki method of afforestation, a proven approach to creating thriving, biodiverse ecosystems. Partly funded by a generous grant through the Essex Region Conservation Authority's (ERCA) Clean Water Green Spaces program, this effort transformed a grassy area of Mersea Park into a densely packed native forest. The selected species, including White Oak, Black Cherry, Tulip Tree, Wild Plum, Spicebush, Hop Tree, and Serviceberry, were chosen not only for their ecological importance but also for their ability to provide nectar, shelter, and habitat for pollinators, including monarch butterflies. Species such as Wild Plum, Serviceberry, and Tulip Trees offer critical nectar resources for adult monarchs during their migration, supporting their survival and journey. Additionally, the educational aspect of this initiative engaged residents and volunteers in conservation efforts, raising awareness about the importance of native plants in supporting pollinator populations and creating a sustainable environment for future generations. By prioritizing native flora, this project directly contributes to Leamington's commitment to monarch butterfly conservation while celebrating community milestones.

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

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

Mersea Park, located at 651 Point Pelee Dr, Leamington, ON

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

500

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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.

Tulip Trees, Wild Plum, Serviceberry, and Hop Trees were planted in a large section of the park.

Please describe the maintenance schedule for these planted areas.

Yearly

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)

10

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

Leamington's 2 km Monarch Trail features trilingual interpretive signage in English, French, and Spanish, ensuring that the message of monarch habitat conservation resonates with Leamington’s diverse population. These signs highlight the critical role of habitat preservation in supporting the survival of this species and fostering awareness and engagement across our multicultural community.

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