

## Bee City Renewal - Entry #36

<b>Name of City, Town or Municipality</b> City of Richmond Hill
<b>Province</b> Ontario
<b>Applicant's Name</b> Ann Marie Farrugia
<b>Applicant's Job Title</b> Manager of Natural Environment
<b>Organization or Department</b> Environment and Infrastructure Services
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<b>Applicant's Phone</b>
<b>Applicant's Email</b>
<b>Are you the primary contact person?</b> Yes
<b>Briefly summarize your Bee City experience during the past year. Please include information about challenges, feedback, and media responses.</b> <p>In recent years, Richmond Hill has gained traction in identifying and tackling pollinator-related issues. In 2017, Richmond Hill made the Mayors' Monarch Pledge and in 2018, Richmond Hill obtained the Bee City designation. Through this designation, the City has been exposed to a large connected network of Bee Cities, gaining access to free webinars where various groups and government agencies share knowledge and experience related to this topic.</p> <p>The designation is well received by the residents of Richmond Hill, helping to guide pollinator oriented initiatives in our community. Having the Bee City designation has expanded the scope of our initiatives that focus on showcasing the importance of pollinators in the City. We have also developed new partnerships with corporations to add to our efforts.</p>

**Please tell us about your community's efforts to reduce the use of pesticides.**

The cosmetic use of pesticides is banned in Ontario. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/pesticides-home-lawns-and-gardens>

**Outline community initiatives focusing on habitat creation and restoration. If possible, include a plant list.**

The City of Richmond Hill has different programs and projects related to the engagement of the community in creating and restoring pollinator habitats. In particular, the Community Stewardship Program's main goal is to increase and enhance the greenway system within Richmond Hill by expanding and restoring habitats on public lands. This program has partnered with the Toronto Region Conservation Authority, Local Enhancement & Appreciation of Forests, Ontario Streams and other groups to achieve these goals. In 2019, Richmond Hill, in coordination with its partners, planted 475 wildflowers, removed 130 bags of invasive species, and 69 bags of litter.

Through the Healthy Yards Program, the City targets pollinator habitat creation on private property through the sale of partially subsidized wildflowers and native plants at an affordable cost. In 2019, Richmond Hill hosted the annual Healthy Yards native tree, shrubs and flower sale, with the presale beginning on March 25, and plant distribution on May 8, 2019. Residents were welcome to purchase one of two flower kit options for the expansion of their gardens with native flower species. These flower kits each had 16 flowers and together totaled 3,032 individual flowers that were sold and distributed in 2019. Specifically, the 108 sun kits and 95 shade tolerant kits included native plants that attract a variety of insects, butterflies and birds. In addition to the plant sale, 35 wild bergamot and another 35 swamp milkweed plants were distributed as prizes for free to further expand the use of native plants on private property. In addition to the wildflowers, 1,255 native tree and shrub species were sold increasing naturalization on private properties. The 2019 event also included garden experts and vendors including David Suzuki Foundation, Richmond Hill Horticultural Society and a local honey vendor with a bee display. The plant lists for the kit is found below:

**Sun Kit:**

- 1 Butterfly Milkweed (*Asclepias tuberosa*)
- 1 Native Grass (Canada Wild Rye (*Elymus Canadensis*), Virginia Wild Rye (*Elymus virginicus*),)
- 3 Lance Leaved Coreopsis (*Coreopsis lanceolata*)
- 2 Blue Vervain (*Verbena hastata*)
- 2 Wild Strawberry (*Fragaria virginiana*)
- 2 Common Yarrow (*Achillea millifolium*)
- 2 Anise Hyssop (*Agastache foeniculum*)
- 3 Black Eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)

**Shade Kit:**

- 1 Bottlebrush Grass (*Elymus hystrix*)
- 2 Great Blue Lobelia (*Lobelia siphilitica*)
- 2 Wild Bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*)
- 2 Wild Lupine (*Lupinus perennis*)
- 2 Hairy Beardtongue (*Penstemon hirsutus*)
- 1 Fern (eg. Maidenhair / Bulblet)
- 1 Wild Ginger (*Asarum canadense*)

- 2 Smooth Aster (*Symphotrichum* leave)
- 1 Zig Zag Goldenrod (*Solidago flexicaulis*)
- 2 Anemone (Common/Long-headed or Canada)

During the City's first Ecofest event, Richmond Hill demonstrated the importance of pollinator-friendly gardens by hosting a planting event where native wildflowers were planted in a canoe at Mill Pond Park. This new pollinator garden was installed in partnership with David Suzuki Foundation as part of the their cross-national Butterflyway Project (<https://davidsuzuki.org/take-action/act-locally/butterflyway/richmond-hill/>). Located in a public space to be enjoyed by the whole community, the canoe contains a variety of native species including wild bergamot, black eyed susan, butterfly milkweed, prairie smoke, hoary vervain, dense blazing star, lance-leaved coreopsis, and hairy beardtongue. These species will continue to provide pollinator habitat and increase the native species present in the gardens around the public parking lot for Mill Pond Park. Similar to the canoe garden, community pollinator gardens have been planted at various locations throughout Richmond Hill as part of the Community Garden Program. Examples of these collective gardens include Harmony Garden run by a local community group and Millennium Garden maintained and tended to by the Richmond Hill Garden and Horticulture Society.

Richmond Hill encourages citizens to certify their personal gardens through the Canadian Wildlife Federation's Backyard Habitat Certification Program. This program recognizes efforts to meet the habitat needs of wildlife, and allows individuals to have their property certified by officially designating their gardens as wildlife friendly. The program is advertised on the Richmond Hill website and Richmond Hill Liberal newspaper with information for how to achieve certification.

### **How did your community promote being a Bee City?**

Richmond Hill has promoted being a Bee City through both digital and print media. The Bee City designation is shared on the Pollinators webpage on the Richmond Hill website. A link to the Bee City website is also shared on the webpage at <http://www.RichmondHill.ca/Pollinators>. Social media posts have been shared through the Richmond Hill Twitter and Facebook account as well as the Greening the Hill Twitter and Facebook accounts. Promotion has been shared in relation to wildflower planting events and in relation to Pollinator Week as seen below:

<https://twitter.com/GreeningtheHill/status/1141008965616250886?s=20>

The Bee City logo has been placed on signage at various locations around the city. Most notable placement is on the sign for Harmony Garden located behind Mill Pond Gallery. This sign was installed in conjunction with the launch of the Bee City designation back in Fall of 2018.

### **Please tell us about your efforts aimed at educating your community, including residents, city employees, contractors, children and other groups.**

Eleven education and outreach events were attended by City of Richmond Hill staff to promote the work of the Environment and Infrastructure Services department. Education revolving around invasive species and native flowers was a topic of concentration this year. Information regarding why residents should not be planting invasive species, and best management practices for removal as well as facilitating interactive games to teach key identification techniques of these unwanted species. To compliment this topic, wildflower identification and the importance of why native flowers should be planted were introduced through games that gave alternatives to invasive garden species. Recommended native species included milkweed and other pollinator attracting species,

which are important to maintain a healthy garden.

In 2019, the City developed plenty of new pollinator-related content. In particular, a webpage for pollinators was added to the Richmond Hill website, which provides information on what pollinators are important, what the City is doing to support pollinators and what residents can do to support pollinators. There is a section specifically for bees and how to support them. Advertising of the webpage has been done through the creation of a pollinators display which will be introduced into the rotation of displays between three community centres in the Richmond Hill. The webpage can be found at <http://www.RichmondHill.ca/Pollinators>.

In the fall of 2019, two concrete storage bunkers for community gardens located within Phyllis Rawlinson Park were painted with murals showcasing local butterflies and pollinator insects. The murals include both life-like paintings of different pollinator species, including bees, and includes the species name painted beside each insect. These projects were shared on multiple social media platforms including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram in the form of Time-lapse videos and videos. Social media posts can be found below:

<https://twitter.com/myRichmondHill/status/1174683066855542784?s=20>

<https://www.facebook.com/myrichmondhill/videos/239599280290058/>

Through the annual Healthy Yards Program, Richmond Hill encourages citizens to plant native pollinator gardens at their homes or in their neighbourhoods. At this event, a variety of gardening and environmentally focused vendors and exhibitors are invited as exhibitors to provide residents the opportunity to speak with experts about plants, pollinators, and gardening. Two exhibitors of importance included David Suzuki Foundation who showcased the Butterflyway project and a local bee farm. The local bee farm brought samples of honey as well as a display of an actual hive/bee colony. Residents were able to see bees in their home while being educated.

**Please tell us about your community's participation in National Pollinator Week celebrations and other events.**

The Council proclaimed June 17 – 23 as Pollinator Week in 2019. <https://eservices.richmondhill.ca/proclamations/>.

During this week, Pollinator-oriented social media posts were shared promoting the pollinator week and sharing pollinator initiatives completed by the City. Links of examples are found below:

<https://twitter.com/GreeningtheHill/status/1140646581764579329?s=20>

<https://twitter.com/GreeningtheHill/status/1141371361358753792?s=20>

<https://twitter.com/GreeningtheHill/status/1141733760523743238?s=20>

**Describe your plans for creating, improving and maintaining pollinator habitat during the next year.**

The City of Richmond Hill will continue to:

- Deliver the Community Stewardship Program
- Deliver the Healthy Yards Program
- Expanding the City's Butterflyway project sites
- Social media posts – new social media platform, time specific items

**Provide information about any events, activities or initiatives that you have organized and would like highlighted through our social media channels.**

Number of people reached: 2563

Number of wildflowers planted: 3507

Richmond Hill hosted the annual Healthy Yards native tree, shrubs and flower sale, with the pre-sale beginning on March 25, and plant distribution on May 8, 2019. Residents were welcome to purchase one of two flower kit options for the expansion of their gardens with native flower species. These flower kits each had 16 flowers and together totaled 3,032 individual flowers that were sold and distributed in 2019. Specifically, 203 kits contained butterfly milkweed, along with other species that attract a variety of insects, butterflies and birds. In addition to the plant sale, 35 wild bergamot and another 35 swamp milkweed plants were distributed as prizes for free to further expand the use of native plants on private property. In addition to the flowers, 1,255 native tree and shrub species were sold increasing naturalization on private properties. The 2019 event also included garden experts and vendors including David Suzuki Foundation, Richmond Hill Horticultural Society and a local honey vendor with a bee display.

### File Uploads

[Richmond-Hill-Bee-City-Application-Photos-2020.pdf](#)

### Has your City/Town/Municipality created a Bee City website or webpage?

Yes

### If you answered "Yes", please provide the URL of your Bee City webpage.

<http://www.RichmondHill.ca/Pollinators>

### Bee City Renewal Fees

Less than 1000 population - FREE

[Bee City Canada](#)