



Bee City Renewal 2020

Name of City, Town, Municipality or First Nation

City of Mississauga

Province

Ontario

Applicant's Name

Paul Tripodo

Applicant's Job Title

Natural Heritage Coordinator

Organization or Department

Community Services: Parks, Forestry and Environment Division

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Are you the primary contact person?

Yes

Pollinator Team Members

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 - Paul Tripodo, Natural Heritage Coordinator; paul.tripodo@mississauga.ca
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Briefly summarize your Bee City experience during the past year. Please include information about challenges, feedback, and media responses.

The City's experience over the past year since becoming a Bee City has been overwhelmingly positive. The initial designation has received the approval of our municipal Council who have shown support for the program overall.

The Bee City designation has been a mechanism to better connect city staff with residents and engage with them on shared initiatives related to pollinators. Increasingly, we receive inquiries from residents about how they can help pollinators, and for input/advice on their own projects at home. The designation sets an example for residents and community groups alike and demonstrates that the city is committed to improving pollinator habitat. One community group called Blooming Boulevards even referenced the city's Bee City designation in developing their own program.

The only noteworthy criticism of the city's program came in the form of a Mississauga News article shortly after the Bee City designation. Although the article did not criticize the Bee City program it did question the rigor of the city's approach and the merits of creating pollinator gardens when in general habitat loss and pesticide use are larger issues having deep impacts on the pollinator population.

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

Since April 22, 2009, there has been a ban on cosmetic pesticides in Ontario. Under the regulation in the Pesticides Act, over 95 pesticide ingredients and 250 pesticide products can no longer be sold by retailers or used by homeowners in Ontario. As such, the use of pesticides in Mississauga is limited through this regulation.

The City of Mississauga does contemplate the use of selected pesticides in unique settings related to good forest management and natural heritage protection. For example, pesticide use is one potential method of treatment related to the control invasive species and considered in the city's Integrated Pest Management programs for such invasive pests as Gypsy Moth and Emerald Ash Borer. To my knowledge, broad-scale, indiscriminate application of pesticides has not been undertaken by the city during the last year.

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

Habitat Creation projects July 2019 – June 2020:

The City of Mississauga's One Million Trees program continued in 2019 and 2020 to create and restore natural habitats throughout the city for the benefit of wildlife, including pollinators. In the fall of 2019, 6888 trees and shrubs were planted as part of this program, and in the spring of 2020 an additional 1095 trees and shrubs were planted at 47 sites throughout the city.

In addition to our One Million Trees naturalization program additional pollinator habitat were created/restored throughout the city last year. This included:

"Solo Park" - Bee hotel installation at Jack Darling Park, September 2019:

o Solo Park is a new public art installation that is also a functional bee hotel. The piece was created through the City's public art program by artists Sarah Nasby and Shannon Linde. The design of the artwork references the surrounding area's history as a cottage resort, amusement park and cottage retreat. The piece also functions as a nesting habitat for native solitary bees (for example mason bees and leaf cutter bees) which use the various tunnels to lay their eggs. The piece will be maintained to ensure it remains a safe and clean habitat for bees.

Installation of Solitary Bee hotels at city of Mississauga Garden Parks:

o The city worked with a local resident to install bee hotels in the city's 4 Garden parks: Brueckner Rhododendron Gardens, Riverwood Park, Hancock Woodlands and Kariya Park.

Creation of a new community pollinator habitat garden creation at Spruce Park:

o The city worked with a community non-profit organization, Blooming Boulevards, as well as community volunteers to create and install a new pollinator habitat garden at Spruce Park. The plant list was:

Aquilegia Canadensis; Penstemon digitalis, Coreopsis lanceolata, Asclepia tuberosa, Monarda didyma, Echinacea purpurea, Ratibida pinnata, Anaphalis sp., Rudbeckia hirta, Symphyotrichum novae-angliae, Aster laevis, Symphyotrichum ericoides, Solidago rigida.

Development of a Pollinator Garden concept for Bradley Museum;

o The city worked with Bradley Museum staff on the development of a pollinator themed garden. Bradley Museum is located along the Lake Ontario shoreline, an important stopover and staging route for migratory butterflies. The installation of the garden was postponed due to COVID-19.

Management of the Jack Darling Park tallgrass prairie:

o The city continues to actively manage the tallgrass prairie habitat at Jack Darling Park. Work in 2019 and 2020 focused on monitoring vegetation, removing non-native and invasive species, collecting and spreading seed of native prairie plants. The continued management focus on Jack Darling Park will ensure that the rare tallgrass prairie continues to flourish and provide essential habitat for the uniquely adapted pollinators associated with this ecosystem.

How did your community promote being a Bee City?

The city's existing pollinator education campaign continued this past year and was propelled by the City's social media channels including Facebook, Twitter and the City's website. This campaign focused on the threats to pollinators, their ecological importance, and their importance to humans. The campaign was also used to spread awareness about the City's pollinator-friendly initiatives. A central goal of this campaign was/is to inspire residents to improve and maintain pollinator habitat on private property which accounts for more than 50% of Mississauga's land base.

Material related to pollinators is showcased on the City's pollinator website which also promotes and celebrates the city's designation as a Bee City. Please

see: <http://www.mississauga.ca/portal/residents/parks-pollinators>. Signage related to the Bee City Canada designation is posted at Mississauga City Hall for visitors and residents to see.

One of city's premier naturalization events occurs during National Forest Week, and in 2019, this event included a pollinator focus. Staff provided educational material and information at booths set up at this event, and in addition we invited a partner organization Alveole to have a booth with a

native pollinator focus. Residents engaged with staff by painting bee hotels that could be taken for home use.

Pollinators and pollination feature strongly in the visual material that is included at City of Mississauga events, in particular at our One Million Trees program community events and other special events that are organized and attended throughout the year. The city has developed signage on the importance of pollinators and their relation to the city's naturalization program. Pamphlets and materials directly from Bee City Canada are also on hand to provide information on the program and the city's commitments.

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

The city will continue to expand its role in educating the public and staff about pollinators and pollinator habitats. Some of the actions we have taken so far include:

- o In July 2020 staff participated in the North American Butterfly Association's annual Butterfly Count Program, which involved training staff and volunteers in butterfly identification and survey techniques. This information contributes to a larger set of data on butterflies across North America.
- o The city has been developing themed educational content for short video segments that will appear as part of our social media platforms over the coming year in order to reach a more diverse audience and to celebrate the good work happening in Mississauga. This will profile such things as our Bee City Canada designation, planting pollinator gardens at home, the restoration of our tallgrass prairie habitat, the solitary bee habitat/art installation, etc.
- o Developing educational materials for staff to have on hand at events that happen throughout the year. We have developed 'Pollinator Flashcards' where residents can match the pollinator to the plant it pollinates, and displays showing certain pollinators that have been found in the city.
- o A Remembrance Day poppy art installation was made out of seed balls filled with native wildflower seeds, which could subsequently be planted to increase pollinator habitat in the city.
- o The city distributed through its events approximately 500 seed packets containing native seeds. These were given to event participants with the anticipation that they are planted in their own yards/gardens to increase and enhance pollinator habitat throughout the urban fabric of the city. Species included: Black eyed susan; New England Aster, Sweet Ox-eye, Virginia Mountain Mint and Grey headed Coneflower.

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

♣ The City of Mississauga celebrated being a Bee City during pollinator week in 2020 (June 22-28, 2020). The City developed a variety of pollinator-related virtual educational activities for all ages including the webinars listed below. Planned events include online workshops with experts on creating your own pollinator garden, what pollinators reside in Mississauga and what you can do in your backyard, patio or other outdoor space to help support pollinators. In addition, Mississauga Libraries offered a virtual storytime about pollinators on June 26.

- o June 22 (5 - 6 p.m.) - Gardening for Pollinators with Blooming Boulevards

- o June 25 (5 - 6 p.m.) - Pollinator Chat with a Forestry Expert

- o June 27 (11:30 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.) - Biology in Your Backyard: Pollinator Edition

The City of Mississauga's social media outlets (Twitter, Facebook and Instagram) highlighted several key messages during pollinator week:

- o The importance that pollinators play in our environment,

- o That the city of Mississauga is designated as a Bee City,

- o Encouraging residents to take the Bee City pollinator pledge,

- o Promoting native species plantings in residential yards, and

- o Showcasing some unique natural habitat within the city that is favoured by different pollinators.

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

The city will continue to expand pollinator initiatives in the coming year by planting pollinator-friendly plants in pollinator gardens and existing flower beds, planting native trees and shrubs through the One Million Trees program and by working with residents to support native species plantings where possible.

Through the city's work with its Our One Million Trees program as well as through partnerships with agencies such as the Credit Valley Conservation and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, the city seeks to transition manicured spaces into naturalized pockets of native plantings (trees and shrubs) that provide extended habitat for animals and insects (including pollinators), increase the urban forest canopy, and contribute to a healthier urban environment.

The One Million Trees program includes an extensive maintenance and monitoring component for all its plantings. Existing and newly created pollinator habitat will be maintained by staff and volunteers through this program. Furthermore, dedicated time and resources will go into the restoration and maintenance of existing specialized habitats such as the tallgrass prairie habitat at Jack Darling Park, which provides exceptional pollinator habitat along the Lake Ontario shoreline

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

Yes

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

<http://www.mississauga.ca/portal/residents/parks-pollinators>

Bee City Renewal Fees

500,001 – 1,000,000 population - \$1000