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Summer 2011 ESP e-newsletter

Environmental Stewardship Pickering (ESP) has joined Facebook. We will be posting our events, e-newsletters and discussions on this page to keep everyone up-to-date. Please "Like" us on Facebook and join the conversation!

[ESP Facebook Page](#)

Take Pride in Pickering Tree Planting a Success!

Michelle Pearce (City of Pickering)

What a success! The annual Take Pride in Pickering Day held on Saturday, April 30 in Alex Robertson Park saw more than 200 volunteers digging in to help plant more than 550 native trees and shrubs. This tree planting was one of many special events in 2011 to mark the City of Pickering's Bicentennial year.



Pickering Mayor Dave Ryan, with the help of Regional Councillor Bill McLean, City Councillor Doug Dickerson and MPP Joe Dickson, planted a special bicentennial tree to commemorate the City of Pickering's 200th year.

This community planting event has taken place at Alex Robertson Park twice a year since 2000. Over the years, community volunteers have:

- planted more than 11,000 native trees and shrubs
- established several naturalized no-mow areas
- planted 500 native wildflowers
- constructed a snake hibernaculum
- installed 35 songbird boxes and two bat boxes
- built an ephemeral (seasonal) pond as habitat for amphibians and turtles

Take Pride in Pickering Day was made possible through a partnership between Environmental Stewardship Pickering, Ontario Power Generation, Toronto and Region Conservation and the City of Pickering.

Our next Take Pride in Pickering Day is on October 15th. Please come join us in our effort to create even more naturalized areas in Alex Robertson Park!

Bicentennial Butterfly Festival

Date: Saturday, September 10

Time: 12:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Location: Alex Robertson Park, Pickering (Sandy Beach Road, south)

Help Environmental Stewardship Pickering create a pollinator garden at Alex Robertson Park. Witness the release of 200 monarch butterflies in celebration of the City of Pickering's 200th birthday.

[For more information visit our Facebook page](#)

Great Canadian Shoreline Clean-up

Date: Saturday, September 17

Time: 10:00am to 12:00pm

Location: Rotary Frenchman's Bay West Park. Meet at parking lot on Beach Point Promenade

Join the City of Pickering and Toronto and Region Conservation as we celebrate the Great Canadian Shoreline Clean-up. Help us get rid of thousands of cigarette butts, plastic bags, bottles, cans, and food wrappers that end up on our Lake Ontario shoreline. When we all do it together it can make a huge impact.

[Please register online](#)

or call the Customer Care Centre at 905.683.7575 (TTY 905.420.1739)

Gorgeous Gardens Fall Edition

For more information, see the event sidebar in this e-newsletter or visit our [Facebook page](#).

Update....Spring and Early Summer in Strathmore

Tricia Harvey (Pickering Resident)

Strathmore, a condominium community of town houses, is located at the north-east corner of Whites Road and Sheppard Ave. Residents hold community gardening days twice a year where they tidy, plant, and pitch in to beautify the neighbourhood. The area is well treed and the residents have planted a number of native plants and shrubs. Dunbarton Creek runs through the east end of the development.



The damp spring we had has helped many of the plants we put in last year to really get established.

We had our usual "Gardening Day" on May 31st, tidying up generally and planting another gift of wonderful native plants from Bonnie Littlely's cottage.

A number of our keen gardeners either went to the Vertical Vegetable session on April 26th presented by Ken Brown or have been on his [website](#). So this season we are experimenting with vegetables. This information session was well attended and very useful for us amateurs with very small gardens. The content described offered to help us:

"Learn how to grow amazing things in small spaces and find inspiration to get outside. Local expert Ken Brown will share innovative, simple and inexpensive ways to use vertical space to increase the amount of foods that you can grow."

So now we have beans climbing up fences, potatoes growing in large pots, tomato plants in just about every yard, peppers, eggplants and garlic flourishing in with the flowers, pots of lettuce on balconies - we are trying everything that was recommended! Harvest time should be interesting and rewarding!

The number and variation of visiting creatures has increased this year with numerous families of robins nesting under some of the decks, chipmunks and a variety of birds along the creek.

It really is a great place to live with the support, services and encouragement of Sustainable Pickering and the Pickering Environmental Awareness Programs.

Monarch Migration

Margo Sloan (Ontario Power Generation)

Two hundred monarch butterflies will be released in Alex Robertson Park in celebration of Pickering's Bicentennial at the Bicentennial Butterfly Festival on September 10th. These butterflies will embark on an incredible journey south to Mexico for the winter.

Date: Wednesday, September 28

Time: 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Location: Pickering Civic Complex, One The Esplanade

Join us at the first fall edition of Gorgeous Gardens.

Perennial favourite Ken Brown, suburban garden guru, presents how-tos for putting your garden to bed and tips on creating an award winning garden. Take a visual tour of Pickering Blooms 2011 winning gardens.

Free giveaways & draw for an amazing door prize.

[Please register online](#)

For more information contact the Customer Care Centre at

905.683.7575 (TTY

905.420.1739) or email

customercare@cityofpickering.com

Take Pride in Pickering - Tree Planting

Date: Saturday, October 15

Time: 9:00 a.m.

Location: Alex Robertson Park
Meet at the south parking lot off Sandy Beach Road

Join Toronto and Region Conservation, Ontario Power Generation and the City of Pickering for a fun morning of planting native trees and shrubs to extend the natural habitat for birds and mammals. A barbeque lunch will follow at Alex Robertson park. Bring shovels and gloves if you have them. Students... earn community service hours for this activity.

[Please register online](#)

or call Mary Williams at 416-661-6600 ext. 5753

Environmental Volunteer Expo

This migration is so long and perilous that it will take 3 to 4 generations to make the round trip.

The monarch's impressive journey begins in late August and early September when thousands of individuals take to the skies and begin migrating south. The monarchs from Southern Ontario will travel to Mexico using rising thermals to reach heights of up to of 3000 feet above the ground and then drift great distances across the continent. A single butterfly may travel over 4000 km to reach a small area of the Transverse Neovolcanic Belt of Mexico, approximately 70-170 km west of Mexico City. There, millions of monarchs gather in the Oyamel Fir forests where the temperature on the volcanic forest slopes hovers just above freezing and the delicate butterflies are protected by the contiguous dense forest canopy. Foresting practices put the winter roosting sites in peril as holes created in the forest canopy by the removal of trees expose the butterflies to the deadly cold. On average, the entire population roosts in an area of only 7.44 ha. This puts the roosting sites in a delicate situation. In 2010, roosting habitat in Mexico hit an all time low, with only 1.92 ha inhabited by monarchs.



The loss of wintering habitat is not the only thing that puts the monarch at risk. The species relies on milkweed plants for survival and urban development has reduced the number of available breeding sites across the US and Canada. The migration north from Mexico, which takes place each spring, is much more difficult for the monarchs. Stopovers along the northbound route are required for breeding, and multiple generations are required to complete the journey north. Breeding sites are also required to boost population numbers after harsh winters.

The monarch butterfly is easily identified by its orange colouring and dark black veins. Female butterflies have darker veins on their wings. Males are identified by a black spot in the center of each hind wing. The caterpillar is large, reaching up to 5 cm in length. It is identified by its bright strips of yellow, black and white.

The bright colours of the monarch butterfly make it not only easily identifiable to us, but also to potential predators, such as birds. As the monarch caterpillar feeds on milkweed plants, the insect accumulates a distasteful toxin in its body, called a cardiac glycoside. This chemical defence remains with the monarch as an adult. When a bird eats a monarch, it becomes ill and learns to associate the butterfly with a bitter taste and illness. The monarch's brightly coloured wings serve as a warning sign to potential predators.

You can help monarchs by planting milkweed in your garden and by eliminating the use of pesticides. You can also be a citizen scientist and help researchers track monarchs across the continent by recording observations in your backyard or at a local park. For more information on citizen science projects, visit the Monarch Watch (www.monarchwatch.org) or Monarch Larva Monitoring

Date: Saturday, November 5th
Time: 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
Location: Petticoat Creek Community Centre, 470 Kingston Road, Pickering

Looking for an opportunity to volunteer, but not sure what is available? Come out to the Pickering Environmental Volunteer Expo and get connected with the prefect volunteer opportunity! Drop in or stay to hear the participating organizations present their "Two Minutes of Fame"

For more information about the organizations in attendance and discussions on the Expo please visit [our Facebook page](#).

4th Annual Environmental Leadership Forum

Date: Saturday, March 3rd, 2012
Time: 9:45 am to 2:45 pm
Location: Pickering Civic Complex

Are you interested in environmental stewardship activities? Whether you are just starting out or have been active for years, there is something for you at the Environmental Leadership Forum. Join us for a free day of training and networking.

As the event gets closer, details will be provided on the [Sustainable Pickering Website](#)

Program (www.mlmp.org) websites or contact ESP to learn how to get involved.

Sources

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