

Report on the McNab Pollinator Meadow

Fiona A. Reid, April 2021

In 2020, a group was formed to create a pollinator meadow at McNab Park in Norval, Ontario. This initiative was part of the David Suzuki Butterflyway Project. Butterflyway Ranger Katherine Shaw contacted Kathy Gastle and Fiona Reid to look for suitable sites. We toured the Norval area on May 15, 2020.

McNab Park is a much-used facility extending to the Credit River. It features a pollinator canoe, small garden, riverside trail and fish sanctuary. Most of the park is mown grass with scattered trees. At the time of our May visit, the area was marred by a barren, uninviting-looking swale that allowed runoff to flow through the park directly to the river. Attempts to seed this area with native plants in 2019 were not successful as the mowing continued throughout the year.

We decided that the swale would be ideal for a pollinator garden, for several reasons:

1. It was very unattractive and served no useful purpose for visitors.
2. It allowed for a wide variety of plants to be established, as the central area was sometimes flooded, and other parts were very dry. The lower area also has some shade and thus supports plants that do well without full sun.
3. The addition of plants would serve to slow the flow of water and thus provide a filtration system to absorb and clean the runoff water before it reached the river.
4. As it is adjacent to a steep hill, it is not generally used as a pathway to the river and thus has very little foot traffic.
5. The garden would serve as a useful showcase and educational area for the numerous families that visit the park.



McNab Swale, prior to planting (May 2020)

We started work on McNab in late May. We were granted \$200 from the Halton North Peel Naturalist Club that we used to purchase 75 native perennial plants. These were quite small, but we felt it would be good to try a diverse array of plants to see what would thrive in this area. Katherine Shaw quickly assembled a crew of 8 volunteers, many of whom worked throughout the summer. We also obtained more than 200 perennials from Julie Power and Fiona Reid. These were contributed at no cost. Volunteers brought bags of soil to provide the plants with a good start. George Gastle improved on a rough string border that we had set up delineating the area being planted.

Over the summer we met weekly, sometimes twice a week, to water the plants and remove weeds. Purple loosestrife was discovered and its large roots were removed as much as possible. Narrow-leaf cattail was also removed. Katherine Shaw and Fiona Reid created signs showing the pollinator insects that we hoped to find visiting the garden.

With funds from the Norval Community Association, we were able to produce a large metal sign explaining more about the role of pollinators and the importance of native plants. We arranged an Unveiling of the signage on September 26, 2020. Ward 2 Councilors Brian Lewis, Ted Brown, Clark Somerville attended the sign unveiling event with regrets from Mayor Rick Bonnette. The councilors and visitors were given pollinator plants to take home.

Our project at McNab gained some attention from the media. The Independent wrote an article about the garden, published on August 12, 2020:

<https://www.theifp.ca/news-story/10137218-halton-hills-residents-abuzz-in-their-quest-to-help-bees-and-butterflies/>

The David Suzuki Foundation put out a news release in September 2020 on the McNab Pollinator Meadows and other initiatives of the Halton Hills Butterflyway group. An article was printed in the Halton/North Peel newsletter.



Soldier beetles on Galliardia were our first insect visitors



Katherine Shaw with Ted Brown and two councilors



The swale in September 2020

Signs were hand-painted by Fiona Reid and Katherine Shaw. Alexis Buset added the handwritten names.





Plant list for McNab Gardens 2020

1. 3 Common Blue Violet, *Viola sororia*
2. 2 Golden Ragwort, *Packera aurea*
3. 4 Tall Coreopsis, *Coreopsis tripteris*
4. 12 New England Aster, *Symphotrichium novae-angliae*
5. 4 Sky Blue Aster, *Symphotrichium oolentangiense*
6. 26 Heart-leaved Aster, *Symphotrichium cordifolium*
7. 6 Panicked Aster, *Symphotrichium lanceolatum*
8. 1 Heath Aster, *Symphotrichium ericoides*
9. 1 Flat-topped Aster, *Doellingeria umbellata*
10. 3 Upland White Goldenrod, *Solidago ptarmicoides*
11. 10 Canada Goldenrod, *Solidago canadensis*
12. 1 Grass-leaved Goldenrod, *Euthamia graminifolia*
13. 6 Zigzag Goldenrod, *Solidago flexicaulis*
14. 3 Stiff Goldenrod, *Solidago rigida*
15. 1 Blue-stem Goldenrod, *Solidago caesia*
16. 5 Sneezeweed, *Helenium autumnale*
17. 5 Pale Purple Coneflower, *Echinacea pallida*
18. 10 Purple Coneflower, *Echinacea purpurea*
19. 6 Sweet Ox-eye, *Heliopsis helianthoides*
20. 1 Jerusalem Artichoke, *Helianthus tuberosus*
21. 15 Black-eyed Susan, *Rudbeckia hirta*
22. 7 Brown-eyed Susan, *Rudbeckia triloba*
23. 5 Grey headed Coneflower, *Ratibida pinnata*
24. 7 Green-headed Coneflower, *Rudbeckia laciniata*
25. 3 Blanket-flower, *Gaillardia pulchella*
26. 2 Carpenter Square, *Scrophularia marilandica*
27. 1 Ironweed, *Vernonia fasciculata*
28. 5 Dense Blazing-star, *Liatris spicata*
29. 5 Cylindric Blazing-star, *Liatris cylindracea*
30. 2 Meadow Blazing-star, *Liatris ligulistylis*
31. 20 Swamp Milkweed, *Asclepias incarnata*
32. 6 Common Milkweed, *Asclepias syriaca*
33. 2 Butterflyweed, *Asclepias tuberosa*
34. 4 Virginia Mountain Mint, *Pycnanthemum virginianum*
35. 5 Boneset, *Eupatorium perfoliatum*
36. 5 Turtlehead, *Chelone glabra*
37. 5 Foxglove Beardtongue, *Penstemon digitalis*
38. 10 Anise Hyssop, *Agastache foeniculum*
39. 4 Yellow Giant Hyssop, *Agastache nepetoides*
40. 1 Downy Wood Mint, *Blephilia ciliata*
41. 7 Wild Bergamot, *Monarda fistulosa*
42. 6 Scarlet Beebalm, *Monarda didyma*
43. 5 Culvers Root, *Veronicastrum virginicum*
44. 4 Harebell, *Campanula rotundifolia*
45. 5 Canada Anemone, *Anemone canadensis*
46. 2 Nodding Onion, *Allium cernuum*

47. 2 Starry False Solomon's Seal, *Smilacina stellata*
48. 3 Golden Alexanders, *Zizia aurea*
49. 4 Evening Primrose, *Oenothera fruticosa*
50. 2 Wild Columbine, *Aquilegia canadensis*
51. 1 Wild Strawberry, *Fragaria virginiana*
52. 10 Pink Cosmos, *Cosmos bipinnatus* Non-native
53. 10 Orange Cosmos, *Cosmos sulphureus* Non-native
54. 3 Common Sunflower, *Helianthus annuus* Non-native
55. 3 Betony, *Stachys officinalis* Non-native
56. 2 Marguerite Daisy, *Argyranthemum frutescens* Non-native
57. 1 Canada Wild Ginger, *Asarum canadense*
58. 1 Maidenhair Fern, *Adiantum pedatum*
59. 2 Ninebark, *Physocarpus opulifolius*
60. 1 Spikenard, *Aralia racemosa*
61. 2 Spicebush, *Lindera benzoin*

Total – 61 species, 250+ plants (approx.) 56 native, 6 non-native (to provide color in the first season)

Native and non-native plants of interest already present:

Goldenrod (various species)

New England Aster, *Symphotrichum novae-angliae*

Downy Willowherb, *Epilobium strictum* (native, small pink flowers)

Canada Fleabane, *Erigeron canadensis* (native, small daisy-like flowers)

Elecampane, *Inula helenium* (non-native, used as an expectorant and for other purposes in Ayurvedic medicine)

Deptford Pink, *Dianthus armeria* (non-native, tiny bright pink flowers)

Purple Loosestrife, *Lythrum salicaria* (non-native, invasive plants with woody rhizomes, throughout the swale)

Plans for 2021

We have started to plan for this season. We want to extend the garden areas so there is a smaller gap between them, and increase both sections so that they are roughly equal in size. We plan to have a backdrop of tall plants and shrubs, to provide a slightly more finished look. We also hope to add a small insect-drinking area and a sign explaining its use by bees and butterflies.

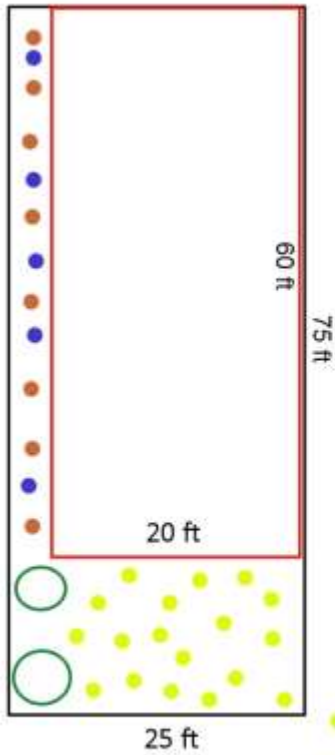
The areas already planted are marked in red on the attached maps. The planned extensions are marked in black.



McNab Park, Norval. Green line denotes boundary. Red boxes are the gardens planted in 2020. Black boxes are the planned extensions

McNab Pollinator Gardens

Red boxes indicate 2020 dimensions
Black boxes indicate planned extension

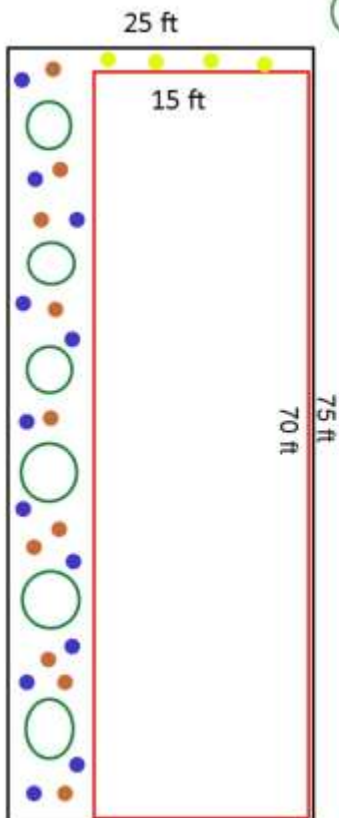


● Assorted perennials with long-lasting blooms (see report for details)

● Native grasses

● Cup Plant

○ Native shrubs - approximately 2 x those indicated here



Plants we would like to add this year are listed below:

Shrubs: 15-20 needed

Ninebark (Fiona can donate 1)
Snowberry (Fiona can donate 2)
Narrowleaf Meadowsweet (Fiona can donate 1-2)
Northern Bush Honeysuckle
New Jersey Tea
Fragrant Sumac

Native Grasses: 20 needed

Big Bluestem
Little Bluestem
Switchgrass
Side Oats Grama
Indian Grass
Bottlebrush Rye

Perennial flowers: 10-20+ needed

Cup Plant (Don Scallen can donate 2-4)
Tall Coreopsis (Fiona can donate 2)
Spotted Bee Balm
Pearly Everlasting
Additional Orange and Swamp Milkweed plants

Ontario Native Plants has all of these plants available for approximately \$6 per plant. The Halton North Peel Naturalist Club has agreed to donate \$200, with which we can buy about 30 plants. We may need to find other sources that are less expensive. Also needed are a rain barrel and topsoil and/or mulch, so that we can reduce the amount of non-native grass.



We look forward to another season of bringing native plants and insects to McNab.