

Sagamore Hills Pollinator Garden Project

Sagamore Hills Township is planning to modify the small Raingarden in the Township Park on Valley View Road. The Raingarden and Rainbarrel combination was installed by former Township trustees, Rosemary Snell and James Hunt, to catch and filter stormwater runoff from the roof of the small restroom facility there and to promote the use of Rainbarrels and Raingardens. The Raingarden will be re-purposed by creating a Pollinator Garden. The Raingarden will still function as a Raingarden, filtering out pollutants and reducing stormwater runoff. By seeding the garden with more native plants, we will increase the functionality of the garden because it is the long native plant roots that do the job of absorbing stormwater and filtering out non-point source pollution. The Raingarden will have a new variety of native plants to attract all pollinators and will also have the added value and dual function of serving as a Pollinator Garden including numerous milkweed plants, which will provide habitat and resting sites for the migrating Monarch butterflies on their way to Mexico. The milkweed is the only host plant for the Monarchs. These butterflies use milkweed exclusively to lay their eggs upon to rear their offspring caterpillars because the milkweed leaves provide food when the caterpillars hatch and come out of their chrysalis. The adult Monarchs also use the Milkweed as a food source to build up strength for their 2500-mile migration from Canada and the U.S. to Central Mexico, where they hibernate before returning in the Spring.

Sagamore Hills has also involved the local elementary school in this Environmental Conservation initiative. The Township and Summit Soil and Water Conservation District participated in a Spring program with Rushwood Elementary School teacher, Renee Piper, and her Student Leadership Group, with the idea of familiarizing the students with the importance of Pollinators and what we can do to help them since their populations are in a steep decline. The students participated in Pollinator games and received educational materials on Bees, Butterflies, and other pollinators.

We plan to have the students prepare the garden by raking and planting native seeds, including milkweed seeds, with the expectation that the seedlings will sprout next Spring. Students will each have a packet of seeds to plant. The seeds were kindly donated by the Ohio Pollinator Habitat Initiative, a partnership of many like-minded organizations working together to save pollinators, including bees and butterflies. You can learn more about OPHI here: <https://www.ohiopollinator.org/> after the Raingarden/Pollinator Garden is planted the students will cover it with Leafy Debris to protect the seeds over winter and prevent soil erosion. We will distribute the Milkweed for Monarchs booklets to the students, compliments of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife.