**Creating A Pollinator Partnership In Park Ridge Schools**



***Background***: The Monarch butterfly has been listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act and is the Illinois State insect. The loss of monarchs has been due in part to the loss of habitat and food sources for the caterpillar that feeds only on milkweed species (Asclepias sp.). Milkweed at one time grew throughout the Midwest. Today in Illinois there is only 1/10th of one percent of tall grass prairie remaining.

***Goal***: By planting milkweed in existing flower beds in our various school spaces we can help in the recovery of the Monarch butterfly – a deep and powerful symbol of life.

***Objective***: The monarch initiative aims to increase the amount of milkweed grown in Park Ridge. Through extensive community outreach, Go Green Park Ridge is engaging with various organizations and individuals in the planting of native milkweed species in 2016.

***How***: Milkweed seedling growing, distribution, and plantings will occur through partner volunteer based organizations, commercial growers, and the Illinois extension service. Partnering schools can bring this activity about in a unique, hands on approach. Once an outdoor space is designated and formally approved by a school(s), Go Green Park Ridge may provide a limited number of volunteers to help plant the milkweed.

***Condition:*** Partnering schools would need to designate a steward for the plantings in the first year’s growing season. After a full year of growth is complete, the milkweed shall be established and independent. There can be no pesticide spraying on the milkweed plants or the nearby nectar plants.

***Outcome:*** Multiple plantings in public spaces, parks, schools, library and city hall can serve as a demonstration and educational tool to further engage the community in conservation. Signage is another learning piece to this Monarch Plan and is being explored.

**Together We Can Make Conservation Meaningful In Park Ridge!**

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