

Butterfly Gardens OF SAUGEEN SHORES



**Kerry Jarvis
BGOSS**

I am often asked how Butterfly Gardens of Saugeen Shores (BGOSS) started. It all began with a phone call I received in September 2014 from Hillary Hall, a member of the Women's PROBUS Club. I was scheduled to make a presentation to PROBUS in the spring of 2015 on the Migration of Monarch butterflies.

Hillary called to say that quite a few Monarchs were seen by the Big Flag in Southampton. These are the Monarchs that would

migrate to Mexico to overwinter. So, my wife, Melitta and I raced down on our bikes to check things out. Sure enough, there was about a dozen or so Monarchs nectaring along the shoreline on Knapweed (an abundant non-native plant).

That's when the light bulb went on. I thought that this would be a great place to plant milkweed and native plants for Monarchs and other pollinators. I thanked Hillary for the information and she suggested that I talk to the town about planting native plants.

This was the beginning of Butterfly Gardens of Saugeen Shores. The timing was perfect. The plight of the Monarch butterflies was escalating as their overwintering population was at an all time low. Habitat loss, extensive use of fertilizers and pesticides, and illegal logging in Mexico were some of the causes leading to this decline. It appeared that now was the time to take action in Saugeen Shores.

Meetings and site walk throughs were arranged with Jayne Jagelewski, Director of Community Services, and

Jessica Linthorne, Community Development Officer from the Town of Saugeen Shores to obtain permissions to plant on public lands.

Spearheaded by Melitta Smole, Stew Nutt and myself, the newly-formed community group Butterfly Gardens of Saugeen Shores was created. We believed that in our own little way, Saugeen Shores could make a difference in the lives of the Monarch butterflies. We set out a three year plan with three main purposes:

- provide a food source for Monarchs and other pollinators
- enhance the visitors experience in Saugeen Shores
- educate people on the plight of Monarch butterflies and native gardening

Over forty species of native plants were grown from seed and lovingly cared for by Grange Hollow Gardens and Nurseries. Partnerships were formed in the first year with Bruce Power, Friends of MacGregor Park, Southampton Rotary, and Bruce County Museum and Cultural Centre.

"Southampton Rotary is pleased to be a sponsor and partner of the Butterfly Gardens of Saugeen Shores," said President John Conlin.

"Not only do the butterflies benefit, people do too. We have noticed increased use of Perkins Park and human visitors enjoying the plants and flowers as much as the butterflies, except for the drinking nectar part."

In the spring of 2015 and 2016, BGOSS, with its many volunteers, aptly named, Pod Squad Ambassadors, planted over 3,500 native plants and 50 shrubs in 13 distinct pods along the Captain Spence Path in Southampton, at Perkins Park, Saugeen First Nation, MacGregor Point Provincial Park, the Bruce County Museum and Cultural Centre and Saugeen Shores Rail Trail.

All of these pods have been registered as certified Monarch Waystations. Butterfly Gardens of Saugeen Shores plants plants, but, we also plant awareness through our pod squad ambassador program,



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Bruce Power is a partner and lead sponsor of Butterfly Gardens of Saugeen Shores. Watering the pod along the Captain Spence Path in Southampton are Bruce employees Emily Johnston, Corporate Affairs – Community and Indigenous Relations and Francis Chua, Manager, Environment & Sustainability.



Volunteers with the Butterfly Gardens of Saugeen Shores – called Pod Squad Ambassadors – created this butterfly-friendly garden pod at Perkins Park in Southampton.

community presentations, monarch tagging days, creating and sharing educational resources, and through our web site, Facebook and Instagram pages.

As well, BGOSS has donated books and DVD's on butterflies, pollinators and native plants to our lending libraries in Port Elgin, Southampton, MacGregor Point Park and Saugeen First Nation.

Visit our libraries and website www.butterflygardensofss.ca to discover butterfly gardening ideas and learn more about this unique community project and how you too can help the Monarch butterflies and

pollinators. Come spring you will be eager to visit our pods and enjoy the beauty of nature.

In our next article we will take a look at the Monarch Butterflies overwintering sites in Mexico. If you are interested in becoming involved with Butterfly Gardens of Saugeen Shores, drop us an email at butterflygardensofss@gmail.com or, like us on Facebook.

Kerry Jarvis is a founding member of Butterfly Gardens of Saugeen Shores. He is a photographer, presenter and author who lives in Southampton and can be reached at www.kerryjarvis.com