

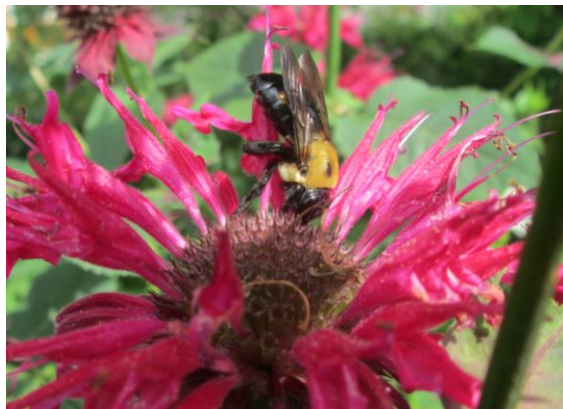
Script for Tuesday, August 26/14 presentation at Planning and Environment Committee

London as a Pollinator Sanctuary

August 26, 2014

**A request for endorsement from
the Advisory Committee on Environment
to
Planning and Environment Standing Committee**

Good afternoon. Thank you for allotting time to hear this proposal for London as a Pollinator Sanctuary. *We hope you will endorse it.*



Bee on bergamot - photo by G. Sass

Some months ago several Londoners turned their concerns about pollinator decline and the bad effects of neonicotinoid insecticides into *a positive idea* - the Pollinator Sanctuary idea - and went to the Advisory Committee on Environment. This proposal developed with their interest and assistance.

I will summarize problems affecting pollinators and how the proposal recommendations relate to current City efforts and the proposed London Plan. We'll then answer your questions.

Pollinators are the animals that pollinate over 90% of all flowering plants. We all know honeybees and bumblebees ... but there are myriad other bees, flies, butterflies, moths, and beneficial insects helping to feed us. *At least* one out of every three bites of food we eat is a direct result of pollination.



Tomato Harvest. Photo by C. Downing.

Pollinators face challenges in both urban and agricultural landscapes: when habitat area is damaged or removed through watercourse change, building, or agricultural practice available food declines in quantity and variety. Disease and pesticides also take their toll.

Just this spring we learned that the Monarch butterfly population has crashed by 90% ... due to loss of its main larval food: milkweeds.



April 2014 - 1.65 hectares for breeding grounds in Mexico
... 5% of Monarch population compared to 1980s

(this text will be beside poster on the PP)

**" I used to say monarchs were a
'pressured' species. Now, I think
'crisis' is too small a word."**

B.J. Del Conte, television producer and gardener, member of
Monarch Watch, speaking near Leslie Spit, Toronto, July
2014

Drastic declines in wild bees and honey bees make headlines. This spring, Ontario was reported as having the highest percent of honeybee winter loss in Canada: an unprecedented 58%



Dead bees - 58% bee loss in Ontario, spring 2014

photo: P. Power, Globe and Mail article June 2014

The Canadian Senate recently heard 50 witnesses on the topic of bee health and food production in Canada. Pollinator loss is a food security issue.

Discussion of pollinator decline has centered on agriculture issues ... particularly the role of neonicotinoid insecticides, which are known to kill bees and persist in plants and watercourses. Horticultural use of the "neonics" became news when over 1/2 the plants tested in a North America wide survey had residue.

The Pollinator Sanctuary Proposal recommends how our urban London can increase healthy pollinator populations *within its jurisdiction as a municipality*. (I'll not refer to specific recommendation numbers or letters as I go through)

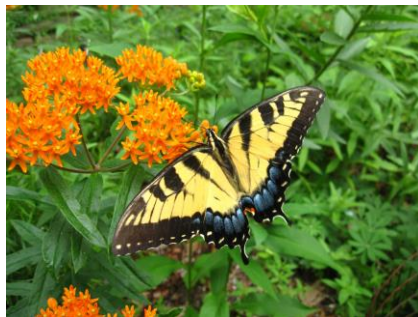
"*Sanctuary*" means safe space. London does have safe spaces in private and public gardens.



Urban London garden. Photo: C. Downing, Aug. 21/14

There are nesting and forage sites along our river areas, in meadows and in the eco-sensitive zones London protects.

Ontario's ban on pesticides-for-cosmetic-purposes reduced the toxic load on urban beneficial insects ... and so supports pollinators.



Swallowtail butterfly on Butterfly Milkweed (*Aesclepias tuberosa*). Photo by 66squarefeet.blogspot.com

More can be done tho'!

If London identifies itself as a Pollinator Sanctuary in its Official Plan, policies, by-laws and programs can be developed to support this designation (Recommendation 1 & 3)

Conversation and action within City departments and with community partners is key to the recommendations put forward in the Pollinator Sanctuary proposal.

City staff already collaborate on projects and know which native and pollinator friendly plants to recommend for City initiatives. A do-able lead step would be for the City to ensure that plants used in its own gardens are purchased from local suppliers who are not using neonicotinoid insecticides (the Civic greenhouses do not use them). (Rec. 7)



City Hall's green "roof". Photo courtesy of LiveRoof

Pollinators fly several kilometers in their search for food. Collaborative City and partnered projects - with guidance from a Natural Heritage Master Plan - would help join up small and larger green spaces, increasing our biodiverse urban corridors. (Rec. 4)

City examples will encourage and support schools, libraries and community centres using their yards, rooftops, and boulevards for plantings. (Recommendation 5)



Syrphid fly on cherry blossoms - source: Pollination Guelph

The City can work with and encourage organizations and businesses to plant biologically diverse areas on their properties, with special emphasis on native plants (Recommendation 6) supplied locally and without synthetic pesticides. (Recommendation 7 and 8)

The Upper Thames River Conservation Authority is in all meanings of the word a natural partner for the City in programs and education. (Recommendation 10)

In London, naturalized areas have increased ... and City actions and partnerships have supported pollinators through initiatives such as the Friends of the Coves Butterfly Garden,



The Coves Swallowtail Grove - pollinator gardens - Friends of the Coves in partnership with the City of London

Adopt a **Park (note, our proposal said "garden" and we didn't catch the error!)**, and its community gardens program.

The City website offers some information about pollinator gardens and supports Seedy Saturday garden information days. (Recommendation 9)



A Seedy Saturday is a community of neighbours, vendors, garden and environment organizations. Photo: Seeds of Diversity Canada

Partnerships on pollinator friendly projects will strengthen relationships with business, community groups and neighbourhoods, fitting with Strengthening Neighbourhoods goals and the successful SPARKS! program.

Pollinator Sanctuary designation will raise the environmental reputation of London regionally and nationally.

... and support the London Plan vision as relates to Natural Heritage, Urban Forest, Parks and Recreation, Food System and Green City.



Monarch butterfly on Michaelmas Daisy. Photo by C. Downing

Citizens agree that London can support pollinators. (*show petition*)

Thank you for this opportunity of presenting today. We hope you have questions and enthusiasm ... and will vote to endorse this proposal.

ACE recommends London's Planning and Environment Standing committee designate London as a 'Pollinator Sanctuary' in the City's Official Plan along with other related recommendations as listed in the July 16, 2014 minutes.

Photo: female carpenter bee pollinating salvia, Berkeley Urban Bee Lab

