

Monarch Garden Looking Good

The demonstration monarch butterfly garden in front of the REAL Deal is coming along nicely. No butterflies yet, but we realize this is a work in progress!

An enthusiastic team got to work shortly after our January meeting where members brainstormed potential projects to mark REAL's 30th anniversary year. This group aims to provide critical habitat for the at-risk monarch butterflies: milkweed host plants for breeding stage, and other colourful native nectar plants for feeding. The garden will also provide habitat for other pollinators: other butterfly species, birds, bees, and insects. Our project will be a visual attraction to visitors and a lasting support to butterfly population – a fitting REAL legacy project. [See our website](#) for photos of the garden's development. Our thanks to Klass Vandermeer, Donna McKenna and Tony Cote for starting some seeds for us, to the Fletcher Wildlife Garden for the donations of plants, to Landscape Products Depot for their help, and to everyone who purchased a rain barrel to provide funds to get started.



A late June view of the monarch garden with the flagstone paths, rocks scavenged from the property and some of the plants in place.

REAL sees this as a demonstration project – we encourage others to take action in their own yards to encourage pollinators of all kinds. In short, you need to plant both host plants and nectar plants. Host plants are where butterflies lay their eggs for the next generation and are the exclusive food source for the developing caterpillars. To attract monarch butterflies, you should plant at least two species of milkweed native to your area. Other butterfly species have their own favourite host plants.

Rain Barrel Fundraiser a Great Success

The Monarch Garden group worked with rainbarrel.ca, a Hamilton company, to promote online orders of barrels for a one day sale Saturday, May 11. We ordered in 30 additional barrels in case people did not hear about the sale in time to preorder, and sure enough, with those sales and preorders, we had sold close to 100 barrels by early June. Customers could choose the colour of barrel, as well as order extra accessories or replacement parts. Proceeds from those sales were directed to establishing our monarch garden. We felt that water conservation for gardening was a nice match and good timing for this particular garden project.

Rain barrels will continue to be available through the REAL Deal store for \$55 plus tax (a total of \$62.15), payable in cash only, while supplies last.

Nectar plants are food for fully-developed butterflies. Choose a variety of early, mid and late season bloomers to provide food throughout the season, and group plantings so there are masses of colour,

Please [see our webpage](#) or do your own google search to learn more about the garden qualities to consider for attracting butterflies. We have listed some [more butterfly resources](#) on our website.

We will be adding some mulch, edging, pea stone, another feature (possibly seating), a couple of trees, and eventually some signage – possibly official Waystation status. The monarch team is considering some sort of ribbon-cutting monarch garden party type opening later in the summer. But please feel free to drop by anytime to see how things are progressing!