



ONTARIO HORTICULTURAL ASSOCIATION

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Keeping Ontario Beautiful

For Immediate Release

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First Pollinator Patch to be planted in Barrie on May 22 – Biodiversity Day!

Barrie, Ontario, May 15, 2010-05-14 – The Conservation & Environment Committee of the Ontario Horticultural Association is committed to Making Ontario Beautiful. Part of making and keeping Ontario beautiful is maintaining the biodiversity of our province.

Under the Roadsides program of the OHA, a pilot “Pollinator Patch” will be created on May 22. The patch is located on the south side of Coulter Street near the new Community Garden and across from Canadian Tire.

Roadsides is a programme of the Ontario Horticultural Association (OHA) that endorses and encourages the gardeners of Ontario to create “Pollinator Patches,” small colonies of native plants in unused public spaces and in private gardens. This is an initiative with a 3 targets.

1. To provide habitat for native pollinators, such as beetles, moths, butterflies and primarily native bees. Pollinator numbers are greatly reduced because of pesticide use and loss of habitat because of urban development, the construction of highway and farming practices which eliminate farm hedgerows. The loss of native pollinators has an economic affect. Crops such as squash, alfalfa and most fruit crops depend on pollinators for fruit and seed production.
2. To preserve native plant species in Ontario. Our native plants are under much the same stress as pollinators. Highway construction especially reduces native plants when we complete highway project by over-seeding with alien grasses instead of replacing the native plants lost during construction.
3. To add a little beauty to Ontario roadsides. Travelling Ontario Highways would be much more interesting were there patches of colourful native plants along the edges of the highways.

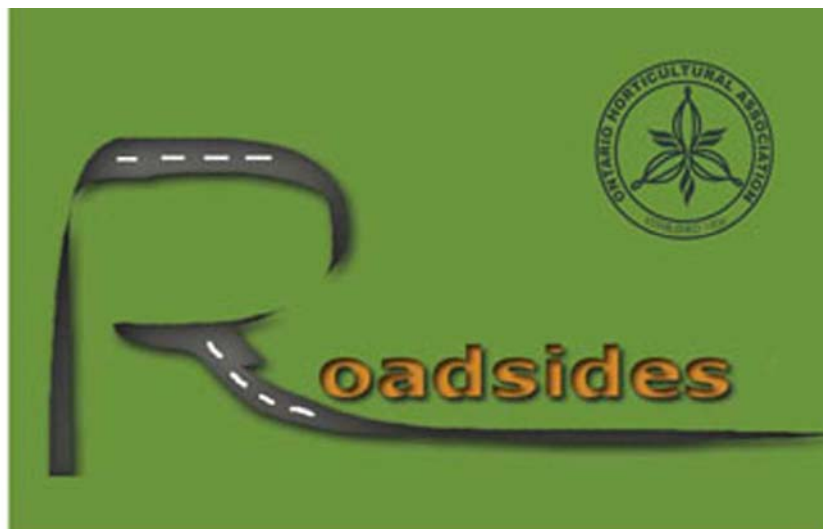
Roadsides is a grass-roots activity accomplished by interested (inspired and excited) citizens. In order to help, the Conservation & Environment Committee of the OHA is preparing a guide for obtaining permission and preparing and planting the “Pollinator Patches.” Originally, the participants will be OHA societies but we can envision including Field Naturalists, Master Gardeners and other small local groups in the programme.

Creating a “Pollinator Patch” is easy. One patch won’t change much but hundreds of patches across the province could make a big difference to the number and health of our native pollinators.

Ontario Horticultural Association

The Ontario Horticultural Association (OHA) includes as members more than 280 horticultural societies in Ontario. Working with its member societies, the OHA develops and coordinates programs across the province.

Roadsides, an initiative of the OHA Conservation and Environment Committee, will be offered to OHA societies in 2010. Other interested groups are encouraged to join the project and need only register with the OHA.



Keeping Ontario Beautiful™

A Project of
The Ontario Horticultural Association

Implementation of Roadsides

Roadsides will be trialed in Fall 2009 and Spring 2010. The project will be presented to societies of the Ontario Horticultural Association for their participation in the summer of 2010.

Introducing native plants takes time. Each project will involve a 3-year commitment by the participating society. Year 1 will be preparation, planting and watering. Years 2 and 3 are maintenance years necessary to ensure that the native plants have time to establish.





The Initiative



Roadsides is a planting project. The goal of the program is to plant islands in units of 10 feet by 20 feet (3m by 6m) of native plants along roads in Ontario.

The initiative has three targets:

1. to provide habitat for native pollinators
2. to preserve native plant species
3. to add a little beauty and charm to Ontario roadsides.

Information and Registering

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The Plight of Pollinators

Human activities have destroyed many native pollinator habitats. Those habitats that remain are isolated and degraded by invasive plant species. These changes to pollinator habitat have resulted in a reduction of food sources and sites for mating and nesting.

Improper use of pesticides has added to the problems facing our native pollinators.

The result is lessening numbers of native pollinators across North America. The US stamp (above) illustrates how seriously governments and conservation agencies see the pollinator situation. The islands of native planting produced by the **Roadsides** project will provide pollinators with an area in which to feed and breed.



Some Common Foods That Depend On Pollination

beans, soybeans, asparagus, broccoll, canteloupes, tomatoes cucumber, pumpkins, squash, almonds, apples, apricots, blueberries, cacao, coffee, coconut, crabapple, cranberries, currants, dates, grapes, huckleberry, peaches, pears, plums, raspberries, strawberries, watermelon, coriander, dill, fennel, lavender, mustard, nutmeg, tea, pepper, alfalfa, canola, flax, sunflower, peanuts

Native Pollinators



Almost 90% of all plant species need help to transfer pollen from one flower to another. This vital contribution by pollinators is necessary to start seed and fruit production. See the list to the left to discover some of our foods that must be pollinated.

Our native pollinators are varied and include bees, butterflies, moths, beetles and flies, bats and hummingbirds.

As food and breeding places are reduced by civilization, native pollinator numbers decline, and an important piece of our natural ecosystem is weakened.

The **Roadsides** project is a plan to increase native pollinator habitat by planting appropriate vegetation along the roads of Ontario.

Native Plants



Native plants are often sacrificed in the urban places as subdivisions multiply and road systems are improved and expanded. They are also lost in the rural environment when farmers eliminate hedgerows and plow right to their boundaries.

With the demise of our native plants, Ontario is losing much of the biodiversity necessary for a healthy ecosystem.

Our roadsides, because they are public lands, could be made accessible for planting projects. This is the aim of **Roadsides**.

Roadsides will provide an excellent opportunity for small but committed groups to reintroduce many of Ontario's native plant species.

