



August 5, 2015

Dear Mayor Eisenberger and Members of City Council,

**RE: Declaring a Hamilton Pollinator Day**

Pollinators, including bees, butterflies, small birds and other beneficial insects, continue to decline in alarming numbers.

Scientific studies point to a variety of potential causes, including habitat loss and exposure to a class of chemical pesticides called neonicotinoids, which appear to compromise the immune system of pollinators and increase vulnerability to a mite, a fungus and a virus that healthy species are normally able to fight off.

The good news is that as of July 1, the Ontario government has become the first government in North America to restrict the use of seeds treated with neonicotinoid pesticides. Ontario has proposed reducing use of neonicotinoids by 80 per cent by 2017.

Still, our local organizations, the Hamilton Naturalists' Club and Environment Hamilton, are receiving calls and emails from community members and neighbourhood associations distraught over what they are observing in their own gardens and nearby natural areas.

This concern has spurred us to develop a project designed to raise public awareness about the important role that pollinators play in our local ecosystems and food production. According to the David Suzuki Foundation, 90 per cent of the world's plants rely on pollinators for fertilization and reproduction, including about 75 per cent of our food—fruits, vegetables, nuts and seeds. Less of these foods mean higher risk to human health.

We also create meaningful hands-on opportunities for people to participate in activities designed to address habitat loss, minimize chemical exposures and promote local food sovereignty.

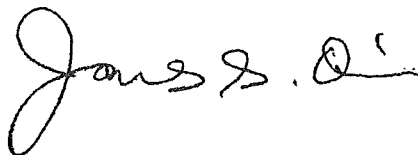
Our project, the Hamilton Pollinators Paradise Project, is working with stakeholders and partners to create pollinator habitat within City parks and community fruit and vegetable gardens (including Victory Gardens) with a goal of making Hamilton a refuge for pollinators.

Through the project, residents are learning how they can create their own pollinator habitats, expanding the amount of pollinator habitat around the city. We are seeing the results of this by the number of private pollinator patches being certified through our program.

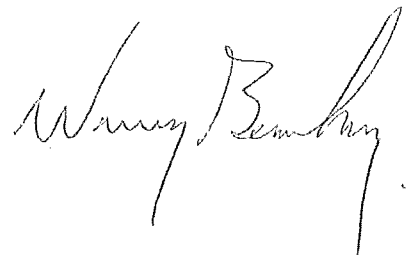
Encouraged by the increasing interest in pollinator health, we are asking that the Mayor and members of Council recognize the positive work being done to benefit pollinators across the city, both by the City and residents. We would like to propose a "Hamilton Pollinator Day" in the month of June when there are more pollinators to be seen. We believe a day in the middle of June (during Pollinator Week from the 15th-21st) would be most appropriate, given that this is a month when pollinators are all around us busy at work ensuring we'll have healthy local food to eat.

Some activities for the day could be "plant a pollinator plant" and receive native seeds, "weeding parties" at existing pollinator gardens, or a fun and educational celebration of Hamilton's Pollinator Paradise. We welcome your suggestions and can be reached at [land@hamiltonnature.org](mailto:land@hamiltonnature.org).

Sincerely,



Jim Quinn  
Chair  
Environment Hamilton



Warren Beacham  
Sanctuary Director  
Hamilton Naturalists' Club

