

**For Immediate Release**

**August 10th, 2017**

**Hamilton--The Monarch Awards “for gardens that nature loves, by gardeners who love nature”: Winner announced!**

Crown Point resident and last year’s finalist, Amy Taylor, is the 2017 [Monarch Awards](#) competition winner.

Now in its second year, the Monarch Award “for gardens that nature loves, by gardeners who love nature” was created out of concern for declining insect populations, especially Monarch butterflies and bees. The award celebrates gardens and gardeners in Hamilton for their contribution to a biodiverse, sustainable environment.

“In creating the award, we wanted to recognize people who plant habitat in their yards for pollinator species and wildlife in general,” says Bev Wagar, one of the creators for this initiative. “The goal is to promote the validity of gardens that are created to be ecologically functional but may fall under a non-traditional aesthetic.”

Amy’s garden meets these criteria. An experienced gardener and herbalist, her garden showcases a huge diversity of species to guarantee blooms right from April through November, along with personal whimsical decor, several amenities for wildlife (bird baths, bug bath, bee boxes, nesting spots), a shed made entirely of recycled materials, and a pergola with natural shade provided by hop vines that are harvested for beer making. There are composters, brush piles to shelter native ground nesting bees, and three water barrels collecting rain.

Said Amy, “My husband Mick and I vow to continue being the best Earth Stewards we can, and will do our best to help others do the same because after all; we are all part of the Earth, and She is a part of all of us”.

The organizing committee for the award includes staff from the [Pollinator Paradise Project](#) (Environment Hamilton and Hamilton Naturalists' Club) along with volunteers from the Royal Botanical Gardens, the Crown Point Garden Club, as well as individual supporters who did much of the legwork.

This “alternative” garden awards program had over 50 entrants this year.

"Once again, we are thrilled by the number of applications submitted in our second year, and seeing the incredible gardens across the city" says Jen Baker, Coordinator for the Pollinator Paradise Project. "The interest is there. It just keeps growing."

A volunteer committee evaluated the applications and chose the "Buzzin' Dozen" semi-finalists, from which seven gardens were chosen for a visit by the judging team.

This year, the judges chose to award four finalist prizes:

Nadia Coakley, West Hamilton; Kelly Jamieson, Crown Point; Matthew Mills, Dundas; and Katie West, Dundas.

Judging team member Charlie Briggs commented on the creative responses to site challenges: "One entrant devised a gravity powered drip irrigation system running from rain barrels. Another had successfully grown a full clover lawn. One had a 100% native plant garden that worked without supplemental water."

The five winners will each receive a beautiful hand-crafted wooden plaque by local woodworker Trisha Fraser. All entrants will receive a "We're Feeding Pollinators" sign, a Monarch Awards sticker, and special early-bird shopping at the upcoming native plant sale hosted by the Hamilton Naturalists Club.

For profiles of the winning gardens, visit [www.monarchawardshamilton.org/winners2017](http://www.monarchawardshamilton.org/winners2017)

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*Amy's Garden, Crown Point.*