

LONGFELLOW COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Gardening for Wildlife Mentorship Program

Longfellow Community Council's (LCC) Gardening for Wildlife Mentorship Program matches new gardeners with experienced mentors for an intensive educational and community building experience. The program is designed to increase pollinator habitat while also educating participants around sustainability and pollinator conservation.

The program is led by highly knowledgeable volunteers and helps to bolster our ongoing efforts to certify the Greater Longfellow neighborhood as a Certified Community Wildlife Habitat through the National Wildlife Federation. By planting native plants and providing food, cover, water, a place to raise young, and incorporating sustainable landscaping practices, we hope to attract and support wildlife, with a special focus on Monarch Butterflies and now the endangered Rusty Patched Bumblebee.

Thanks to funding from the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources' (BWSR) Lawns to Legumes Demonstration Neighborhood Grant Program, each participant will have the opportunity to be reimbursed up to \$350 for native plants and mulch during the 2020-2022 growing seasons.

Eligible Applicants

Owners and renters of single-family and multi-family residential properties in the Longfellow, Cooper, Howe and Hiawatha neighborhoods.

Renters must obtain permission from the property owner, including their signature on the required resident agreement.

Applications are accepted from February 1st through the end of March each year.

Greater Longfellow residents interested in participating in the program should contact Daniel Schultz at: dschultz6@comcast.net

Selection Process

Participants for the Gardening for Wildlife Mentorship Program are selected on a first come first serve basis.

There is a \$75.00 participate fee for the program, however expenses for native plants and mulch may be reimbursed up to \$350 through LCC's Lawns to Legumes Demonstration Neighborhood Grant program.

Mentorship Program Process

April

Approved applicants acquire the book "Landscaping with Native Plants of Minnesota," by Lynn Steiner and attend a required two-night introduction class. During this class Mentees learn to design their wildlife friendly yard, why native plants are so important, and consider options for plants and features to turn their yard into a certifiable wildlife habitat.

By the end of April, Mentees should have completed their coursework, and will be matched with local Mentors who have extensive experience in designing and maintaining urban wildlife habitat. The mentors include Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, as well as individuals with professional backgrounds in botany, habitat restoration, landscape design, and forestry. The Mentors share their advice, experience, and even some of the plants from their own yard.

May through July

Mentors help Mentees to dig and plant their gardens. During this period an optional field trip will be held to visit a local native plant nursery.

August through September

A community garden tour event is held each August featuring Mentor and Mentee yards.

The program concludes in September with a wrap up social event and seed exchange.

By this point, Mentees will be able to certify their yards as a Wildlife Habitat through the National Wildlife Federation (more info on our communities' efforts at www.LongfellowWildlife.blogspot.com).

Requirements for Native Plants and Mulch Reimbursement

The BWSR Lawns to Legumes Demonstration Neighborhood Grant Program requires that all participants who request the reimbursement of up to \$350 for native plants and mulch sign a resident agreement and commit to maintaining the garden for a minimum of five (5) years. Maintenance includes maintaining the habitat value and aesthetics of the project.

Additionally, only MN Native seeds or containerized plants (insecticide/neonicotinoid free plants), Double Shredded Hardwood Mulch and Leaf Compost are eligible for reimbursement. Non-native plants such as Cultivar, Hybrid and Annual Plants are not eligible

Property owners will also be required to:

- Allow a sign to be placed in the garden to indicate participation in the MN BWSR Lawns to Legumes Grant Program.
- Allow photos to be taken of the property, which may be used in project reports and shared on LCC's website and social media accounts.

LCC Program Manager

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