Mills Park Monarch Butterfly Habitat

Initial Planting
In May of 2017 a group of village volunteers engaged in the first stage of planting the Mills Park Monarch Butterfly Habitat. Six hundred donated monarch-attracting native perennials and a companion crop of annual flax were planted in several inches of village leaf compost.

An Evolving Process – Three Years to Maturity and Beyond
The habitat’s native perennials began as two-inch plugs and, as of fall 2017, have reached one-gallon size. The seeding of annual flax served many important purposes. The flax protected the young perennials from disturbance. It crowded out weeds, attracted pollinators, and provided an economical method for the initial planting of the 5,000-square-foot habitat.

As the native perennials continue to increase in size, they will fill the space currently held by the flax. Next year the perennials will flower. The following year they will reach full size. Through self-seeding, each season the perennials will generously increase in number, eventually filling the beds.

Monarch Butterflies and Caterpillars Discover Mills Park
In this initial season of planting, adult monarch butterflies have been visiting the habitat, and many monarch caterpillars have been spotted feeding on the new milkweed plants. As the plantings mature, more monarch adults and caterpillars are expected to discover this welcoming habitat.

Native Planting List
- *Agastache foeniculum* (anise hyssop)
- *Asclepias incarnata* (swamp milkweed)
- *Eutrochium maculatum* (Joe-Pye weed)
- *Monarda bradburiana* (bee balm)
- *Symphyotrichum cordifolium* (heart-leaved aster)

Coming Next Season – Spring and Summer 2018

*Earth Day*
In celebration of Earth Day, on Sunday, April 22, 2018, the village invites residents to assist in planting additional pollinator conservation plants at Mills Park. All ages will be welcomed, and refreshments will be provided.

*Ladybug Party*
In early summer (date and time to be announced) kids can join in the fun by attending a ladybug party and picnic at Mills Park. Ladybugs will be released at dusk. All ages will be welcomed.

Photo Courtesy of Photographic Art Designs by Tina LeCour