

# Monarch Butterfly Gardens

May 14, 2025

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Executive Summary:

## **· Project Overview**

**Plan: Establish monarch butterfly gardens across Naperville to demonstrate our sister city relationship with Patzcuaro, Mexico.**

1. Naperville's Sister City of Patzcuaro is located in the same Mexican state as the Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve, the main winter home for monarch butterflies from across North America. Every monarch butterfly found in the United States migrates to this area each year.
2. This proposal suggests creating special gardens in Naperville to support monarch butterflies. These gardens would include milkweed, which is the only food monarch caterpillars can eat, along with other flowering plants to feed adult butterflies. By linking these gardens to our Sister City relationship, we can draw attention to Naperville's international ties in a simple and meaningful way, while also promoting environmental care.
3. Monarch butterflies are well-known and loved, making this project a natural way to involve residents and families in a shared effort that benefits both the community and the environment.

## **· Key Objectives**

The 2025 goal will be to have at least one community garden planted with a sign about the project by the end of the year. Our aspirational goal is to have 3-4 similar sites across the city by 2026.

Project breakdown:

1. Secure garden site (ongoing). Likely community or privately owned land initially as a pilot project which will be easier to navigate. Also contacting local elementary schools. (No cost.)

2. Assemble volunteers for soil preparation. Will need to remove existing grass and prepare the soil. (may need to rent a sod cutter machine or ask if the city can provide service). Potential groups for manpower include Boy Scouts, high school groups.
3. Design plants layout. Including milkweed and other native plants, with attention to making it especially photogenic in order to encourage community visits. Can ask the Sustainability department and Conservation Foundation for help with design. (already in contact)
4. Create a sign to commemorate the project and provide links for educational content via QR code (design started).
5. Marketing plan. Once completed, arrange for traditional and social media to dedicate the project (pending).

## · **Expected Outcomes**

The initial pilot garden will be immediately accessible to the community and demonstrate our relationship to the sister city. There will be immediate opportunities for local elementary schools to incorporate the site into already pre existing education content in science classes. The site will also demonstrate environmental sustainability in the community in a meaningful and enjoyable way.

Our 3-5 year plan is to expand the program across the city, taking advantage of smaller unused land, or land that is difficult or costly to maintain with grass. There are many different potential sites, including city owned land, private organizations, churches, schools, “court circle” land in a cul-de-sac street, etc. There will be economies of scale for the plants in future years. Involving students in high schools will provide recurring opportunities for community service for the students and also manpower for site preparation and occasional maintenance.

Social media initiatives may include encouraging the community to share photos of the sites. We can also promote programs such as “100 Butterfly Challenge” which could challenge people to post a comment on Instagram when and where they see a butterfly in Naperville. Next year’s goal may be more ambitious, etc.

The bond with our Sister City and the shared story of the monarch butterfly will bring the community together and help the project thrive over time.

## **Funding request for 2025 Sister City Monarch Butterfly project**

Estimated cost per site. Currently planning for 2 sites as a pilot project. This will be geographically diverse across the city and also act as insurance against any unexpected administrative hold up so we can at least produce one successful site.

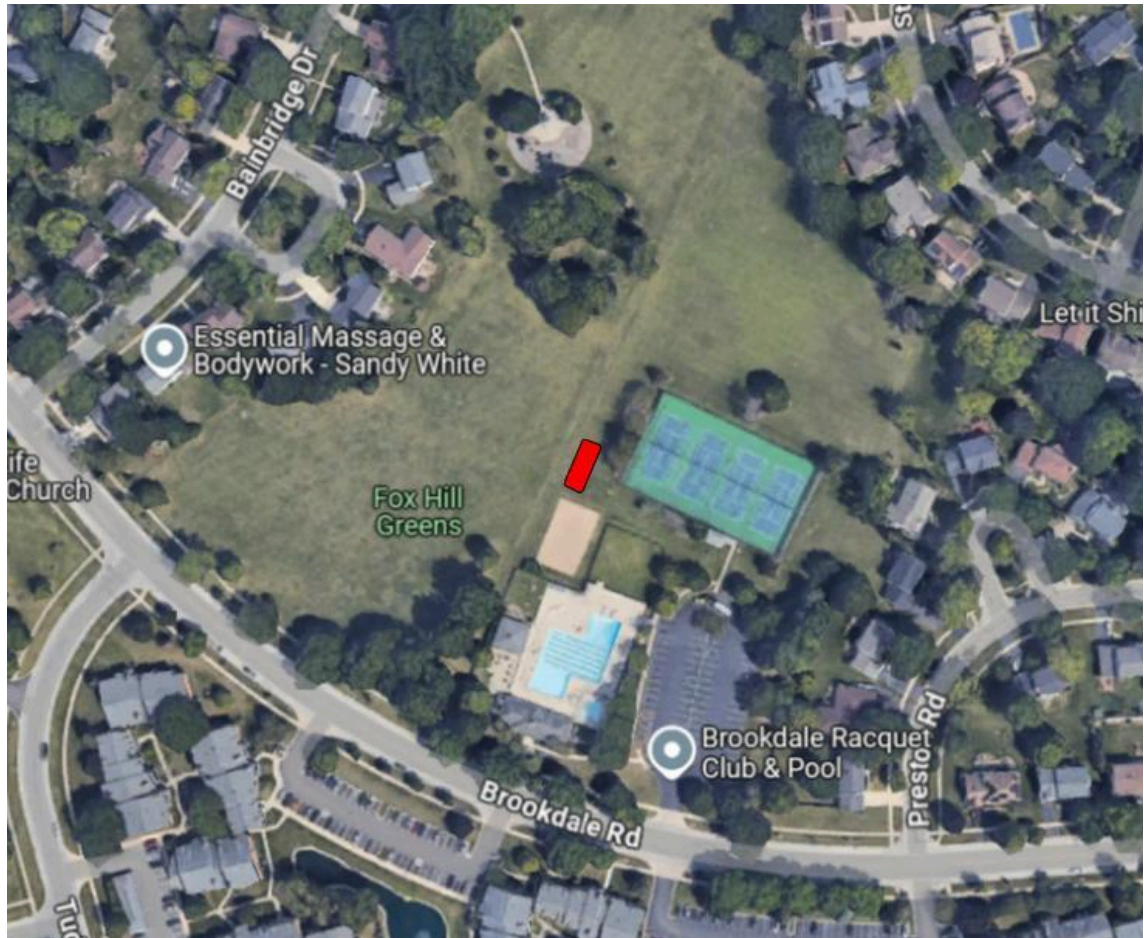
We may be able to reduce costs if we can secure equipment use from the park district or other facilities department.

Wholesale prices available through collaboration with the Conservation Foundation.

### **Site 1: Brookdale Racquet Club**

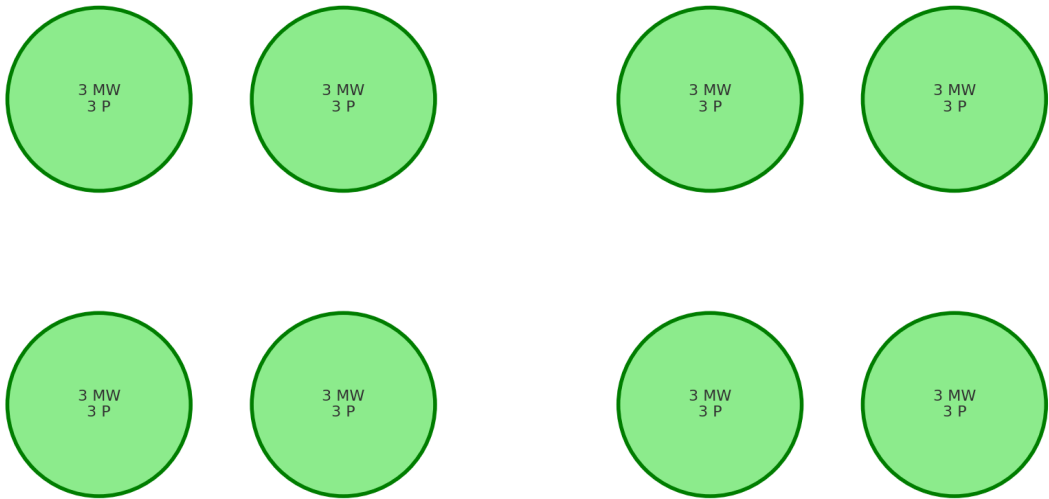
Large open area of 5+ acres that they are already planning to convert from maintained grass to native plants. The location is directly adjacent to Fox Hill Greens, a Naperville Park District site. Suggested area is approximately 300 sq ft, full sun with good drainage.





Garden Layout: 8 Planting Clusters in 20x10 ft Area

Each cluster: 3 Milkweed + 3 Pollinator plants



Plants (\$10/plant x 48)	\$480
Rental equipment	
Auger	\$100
Sod cutter	\$150
Mulch 3 cubic yards (est. \$50 each x 3)	\$150
Sign	\$100
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Total    Site 1	\$980

## **Site 2: Ashwood subdivision**

Expansive, privately maintained landscaped area with several smaller areas that the HOA is interested in converting to native plants for ease of maintenance and cost savings. There are two proposed sites. The first one will be referred to as site 2A and is a larger area on the grounds of the local elementary school (Peterson Elementary) where there is already permission for planters and gardens since 2023. Part of it is currently being used for raised garden beds installed through collaboration with the local Boy Scouts. This is along the area where the students go out for recess; often there are opportunities to interact with the garden area including educational activities. The proposed site is adjacent to this area on land that currently has poorly growing grass.

The second site (2B) is located on the common area near the entrance to the subdivision. The property is professionally landscaped and maintained, and there is an ongoing project by the HOA to convert much of the manicured grassy areas into plants and to create non-grass buffer zones next to the ponds, for both cost savings and ease of maintenance. The proposed site is two smaller corner spaces along intersecting sidewalks that currently has some annual tulip plants and lilies. The area is well travelled by residents on daily walks and would be a very high visibility location. Potential concerns would be that since this is a very public area, there will need to be more care taken to keep the plant selection more attractive and less wild and weed-like. However as a bonus, yearly maintenance of the site can easily be rolled into the existing professional landscaping service already in place at no additional cost.

### Plants (\$10/plant)

Site 2A (48 plants)	\$480
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Site 2B (8 plants for each corner x2) 16	\$160
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### Rental equipment

Auger	\$100
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Sod cutter	\$150
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Mulch 1 cubic yards (est. \$50)	\$50
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Sign	\$100
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Total for two corner sites	\$1040
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Site 2A: Peterson Elementary  
Adjacent to recess area





Existing community initiative for educational planters.

## Site 2B: Ashwood corner sidewalks

