

Background

In March of this year, MARS received a grant in the amount of \$500 from the Gardens in Bloom Grant Program to help with development of native plant gardens for MARS Wildlife Rescue Visitor Centre.

The purpose of this Native Plant Project is to reestablish indigenous plants on our property, beginning with the area around the visitor centre. Working with a landscape design by Arianne Huene (A Rose in Thyme), MARS' volunteers developed a workplan at the beginning of the project.

Over the past eight months, we have reached our most immediate objectives:

1. Make the grounds around the visitor building more attractive; and



2. Provide information for visitors interested in creating wildlife habitat on their own property

Note: Volunteers have labelled plants in garden beds and also along the forest paths. See next page for photo of trail.





Volunteers working on newly developed trail system.

Volunteers also lifted, saved and replanted a number of plants that would otherwise be lost to construction of trails and rehabilitation pens.

Project Progress to October 15, 2020

- Beds near Visitor Centre entrance – most plants are flourishing despite the heavy browsing by deer. Very early in the project It became apparent that fencing protection was needed.

- Oval bed in front of kiosk –

This area was excavated, and, after removing large rocks, filled with topsoil. The Garry Oak planted in September was heavily damaged by a deer rubbing his antlers but may yet recover. Now fenced and planted with native shrubs.



- “Bee Garden” – An element of the landscape design, we’re hoping this little garden will attract a number of bees and insects and, once established, become a rapidly renewable source of food for resident deer.



- Around the wetlands -
Volunteers have been planting a variety of grasses, sedges, reeds and cattails, many of which are now established and healthy.
- The birding team from CVNature have identified 64 species of birds on the MARS property: [eBird list](#)
- The [iNaturalist list](#) of flora and fauna at MARS is growing too: 256 species



We hope that these numbers indicate that our work is increasing the number and diversity of birds attracted to the MARS Visitor Centre.

Finances

Gardens in Bloom Grant \$500

Donation \$200

- Purchase of topsoil and mulch –Cost \$500 with delivery from Renuable Resources
- Purchase of plants from Streamside Native Plants – after significant discounts \$157.79
- Purchase of additional topsoil – Cost \$272.16
- Fencing \$95.19
- Purchase of native plants from Streamside \$110

Total expenditures to date \$1,135.14. Note: this total does not include donated seeds, a great number of donated plants and many hours of volunteer labour.

I'd like to take this opportunity to recognize and thank our wonderful volunteers: Jan Smith, Royann Petrell, Ron Kelly, Trudy Watts, Jane Sproull Thomson, Eloise Holland, Warren Warttig, John Turner, Celesta Buchanan, Allison Morrison, Valerie Berry

We have very much enjoyed this project. Thank you for your support.

Please contact me with questions or for further information.

Respectfully submitted by Pearl McKenzie, Vice-President, MARS Wildlife Rescue Centre