# The Pin Oak

*"Giving Nature a Helping Hand"*

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## News

The Friends of Malcolmson Eco-Park will be celebrating the 100th anniversary of Girl Guiding in Canada at our annual Earth Day event on Saturday April 24th from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The namesake of the park, Mary Malcolmson, founded the first Canadian Girl Guide company which was officially registered in 1910.

Earth Day at Malcolmson Eco-Park is an annual tradition in St.Catharines. Each year 150 volunteers come out to remove garbage from the park, repair the trail network, apply mulch to trees and gardens, and plant wildflowers and trees. Earth Day is the most important event for the park. We will also be having our Annual Native Plant and Tree Sale to raise money for park projects. A second plant sale will be held on Saturday May 8th. We need volunteers so please mark this date on your calendar and we hope to see you at the park on Earth Day.

## *Earth Day 2010 & Native Plant Sale*

**Saturday April 24th 2010**
**Time: 8 am to 1 pm**

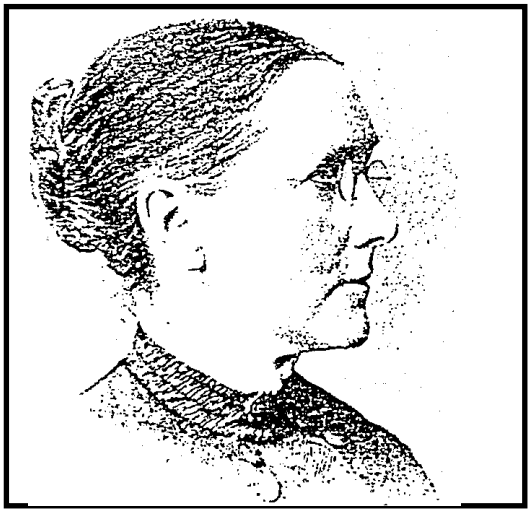
**Location: Malcolmson Eco-Park**
**Lakeshore Rd. at Niagara St.**

**Activities:**
**Mulching, Garbage Removal, Pathway Cleanup, Planting**

**2nd Native Plant Sale: Saturday May 8th 2010**
**Time: 8 am to 1 pm**

## Origin of the Name: "MALCOLMSON ECO-PARK"

The first Canadian Girl Guide Company, under the direction of Mary Malcolmson, began meeting on January 11, 1910, at the Welland House. The Welland House was a famous health spa in St. Catharines which attracted patrons from all over the country. Mary was a teacher and a community spirited woman who believed in the spirit of Guiding. She loved the girls and the outdoors. Her favorite tree was a tulip tree, a species native to the Carolinian Forest. There is a plaque in Montebello Park in St. Catharines honouring her, dedicated by Mrs. T.A. Rigby (her granddaughter) to celebrate forty years of Guiding in Canada. A second stone was added in 1967 on Canada's 100th Birthday also in her honour. In 1976, Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau officially handed over the land that would become Malcolmson Eco-Park to the City of St. Catharines. City Council named the park after Mary Malcolmson in honour of her contribution to Guiding in the City of St. Catharines.



# Native Plant Sale

The Native Plant Sale is being held on **Saturday, April 24th** and **Saturday, May 8th** at the Malcolmson Eco-Park compound from 8:00 am - 1:00 pm. Below is a **tentative** list of native wildflowers, shrubs and trees that will be available for sale. The list is subject to change depending on availability. Generally, wildflowers will be available in 10-cm pots and trees will be available in 4-litre pots. Please contact Josh Diamond if you require further information.

## Trees and Shrubs

Low Service Berry
New Jersey Tea
Bush Honeysuckle
Spicebush
Fragrant Sumac
Black Currant
Eastern Redbud
Smooth Wild Rose
Carolina Rose
Swamp Rose
Purple Flowering
Bebbs Willow
Woolly Willow
Snowberry
Wild Raisin
Swamp Maple
Black Maple
Mountain Maple
Speckled Alder
Yellow Birch
Redbud
Tulip Tree
Wild Crabapple
Pin Cherry
Peach Leaved Willow
American Mountain Ash
American Bittersweet
Virgin`s Bower
Glaucous Honeysuckle
Moonseed
Chokeberry
Button Bush
Paw Paw
Winterberry Holly
Ninebark
Narrow Leaved Meadowsweet
White Cedar
White Pine
Kentucky Coffee Tree
Dwarf Hackberry
Bladdernut
White Flowering Dogwood
Shagbark Hickory
Pussy Willow
Witch Hazel
Eastern Red Cedar
Tamarack
Black Cherry

## Wildflowers and Grasses

Jack-in-the Pulpit
White Baneberry
Red Baneberry
Yellow Giant Hyssop
Wild Garlic
Nodding Wild Onion
Wild Leek
Canada Anemone
Purple Angelica
Wild Columbine
Butterfly Weed
Smooth Aster
New England Aster
Ontario Aster
Sky Blue Aster
Turtlehead
Joe Pye-Weed
Purple Joe-Pye Weed
White Snake Root
Flowering Spurge
Closed Gentian
Wild Geranium
Prairie Smoke
Long-Leaved Bluets
Pale-leaved Sunflower
Tall Sunflower
Pale Flag Iris
Round Headed Bushclover
Dwarf Blazing Star
Michigan Lily
False Solomon's Seal
Starry Solomon's Seal
Solomon Seal
Tall Cinquefoil
Hairy Mountain Mint
Grayheaded Coneflower
Greenheaded Coneflower
Compass Plant
Prairie Dock
Stiff goldenrod
Switch Grass
Blue Vervain
Arrow Leaved Violet
Wooly Blue Violet
Golden Alexander
Black Eyed Susan
Red Trillum
White Trillium

## Wildflowers and Grasses

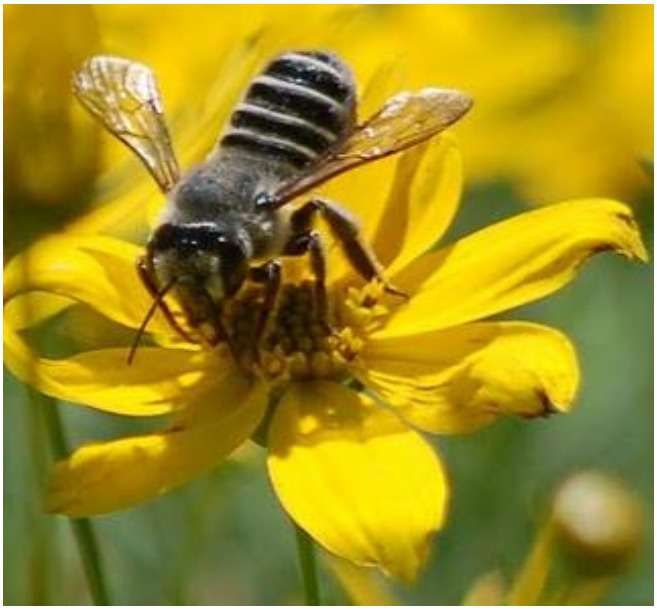
Ironweed
Hairy Beard Tongue
Pokeweed
Culvers Root
Downy Yellow Violet
Mint
Grayheaded Coneflower
Greenheaded Coneflower
Compass Plant
Cup-Plant
Tall Cinquefoil
Bloodroot
Wild Ginger
Swamp Milkweed
Sweet Ox-Eye
Cardinal Flower
Brown-eyed Susan
Virginia Mountain Mint
Foxglove Beard Tongue
Great Lobelia
Jack-in-the Pulpit
Boneset
Pale Coneflower
Running Strawberry Vine
Swamp Rose-Mallow
Spiked Blazing Star
Michigan Lily
Mayapple
Hoary Vervain
Big Blue Stem
Little Blue Stem
Indian Grass
Bottledash Brush Grass

# A GOOD START TO THE NATIVE BEE PROJECT

By: Frank Hardy

Over the past couple of years we have heard many reports on the decline in numbers of plant pollinators. Loss of habitat and pesticide are the two major contributors to the problem. The fact that up to 80 percent of flowering plants require insect pollination to adequately set seed and fruit proves how serious this is. Many insects, such as ants, beetles, moths, butterflies, wasps and bees, act as pollinators. When we speak of bees most people think of European Honey Bees (*Apis mellifera*). The recent losses in honey bee populations have left bee keepers and scientists desperate to find answers to this global agricultural tragedy. Bees native to North America have been disappearing as well and although this has not received as much media attention, it is of equal importance. Native bees are mostly solitary, nesting in cavities or in burrows in the ground. Unlike some species of wasps that live in large groups and often sting aggressively to protect their nests, native bees are very reluctant to sting. They go about their business often unnoticed or mistaken for some type of fly. The truth is that native bees are the most efficient pollinators. For example, many species of Leaf Cutter Bees (Family Megachilidae) have pollen collecting hairs on their abdomens called scopa. As they land on a flower, the pollen from the anthers of the flower sticks to the scopa and some of the pollen is transferred to the next flower the bee visits, thus performing the vital task of cross pollination. Megachilids are cavity nesters and they look for holes with a diameter size between 3 and 9 mm and a depth of 10 to 15 cm. These cavities are often holes made by wood-boring beetle larvae in dead trees. Megachilids include leaf cutter bees and mason bees (*Osmia genus*).

The latter seal their nest chambers with mud, so a source of wet soil nearby greatly improves the chances of successful attraction of this type of bee. To help restore a healthy population of these wonderful little critters, we put out nest boxes for them. We used solid, untreated blocks of wood measuring roughly 4”x6”x18” high with a series of holes drilled into them of the diameters and depths mentioned above.



These blocks where mounted on poles about four feet high and facing south, south-east. The accompanying photo (see below) of this type of box shows “no vacancy”. As you can see, all the holes are blocked with a mud, leaf-litter substance. This picture was taken mid-winter 2009-2010 at Malcolmson Eco-Park. By spring and early summer the hatchlings will have emerged and the cycle of carrying pollen to the cavities, laying an egg on the pollen ball and sealing the brood chamber will start again. It gave us a great feeling of satisfaction to see how well the nest boxes were accepted by the bees. Also, it reinforced the importance of natural areas such as Malcolmson Eco-Park. As part of this project, nest boxes were placed in various urban gardens and at the Glenridge Quarry Naturalization Site.

For the 2009-2010 season, results show the Malcolmson Eco-Park boxes rated considerably higher with some of the boxes being full to capacity. Boxes at the other locations were inhabited, but to a lesser extent, and often by other insects such as some types of wasps that I suspect completed their life cycle in the 2009 season and therefore did not over-winter in the boxes. While the locations for these boxes were carefully chosen and placed in areas with good plant diversity, there are some clear reasons why Malcolmson Eco-Park showed better results. 1) Native bees were already at the park due to the many standing dead trees that provide habitat for them and countless other wildlife. 2) The ponds on site provided mud for the bees to seal their nests. 3) The continuous native wildflower re-introduction program at the park provided ample pollen for the bees. As the title of this article says, it’s a good start. Let us never underestimate the importance of protecting natural areas for our sake as well as for the sake of the bees.

One of several bee boxes at Malcolmson Eco-Park in the Tall Grass Prairie

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City of St.Catharines Contact: Mike Anderson City of St.Catharines 905-688-5601 ext. 3140