

James A. French
35 Bauer Crescent
Unionville, ON L3R 4H3

February 4, 2013

Mayor F. Scarpitti and Deputy Mayor J. Heath

Gentlemen:

First, I want to thank you, members of council and staff for the consistent support you have given to The North American Native Plant Society since I founded it right here in Unionville in 1985. I am delighted to see the native shrubs that were planted beside the civic centre pond last September and look forward to seeing the wildflowers that I understand will be planted there in June.

I ask you now to consider and support a further native plant project - one which would make Markham a leader in conservation, make the civic centre unique in Canada and give the citizens of our city an incomparable, public, native plant park to enjoy... all located around our civic centre.

I propose we develop two major native plant gardens. The first would be a woodland garden consisting of spring blooming native trees such as dogwood species, viburnums, wild plums and cherries, crab apples and others, with an understory of wildflowers such as trilliums, wood poppies, Virginia bluebells, various ferns and many other seldom seen but stunning plants. These are illustrated in Exhibits 1 and 2 (attached) from my own Stoney Lake Native Plant Reserve. We should add a modest water feature (Exhibit 3 attached) which will provide a habitat for certain moisture-loving species and attract birds and animals (nothing threatening!). Visitors to my reserve are always enchanted by the sound of gently flowing water, which stirs something in the human spirit. The blossoms of the trees attract many different insects and the fruits are much sought after by birds like the cedar wax wing shown here.



The second garden would be a magnificent oak, tall grass, savannah prairie like the Ojibway prairie (Exhibit 4 attached) in Windsor, Ontario. This type of prairie was once fairly common in southern Ontario but alas, only scattered remnants remain. This habitat suits quite a different variety of wildflowers and birds, such as the bobolink and meadowlark, which we no longer see but which might return to this grassland home.



Both gardens should have wheelchair accessible paths for easy viewing and benches for a rest stop for the many visitors. These gardens will offer the community an opportunity to reconnect with nature in many ways. Our young people will have a natural site to observe, learn from and enjoy - an environment that most would otherwise never have the chance to see. I know teachers will bring their students in large numbers to tour the gardens.

Of course we must deal with the question of costs. I note that we plan to spend well over a million dollars to try and protect the common ash tree from the borer. We can create these gardens for far less than that while providing much greater benefits. This should be considered a city (community) project and therefore, financed by the city. It is not reasonable or probable that conservation groups could finance this project on their own. This is not to say that local businesses or the community at large could not be asked to help. The Metro Zoo was very imaginative in doing this.

I do not represent any conservation group and cannot speak for them but I am certain they (and the community) would endorse this idea and want to participate in its creation. I look forward to hearing your thoughts and will be happy to meet with you to exchange ideas once I return from Florida in April. In the meantime, please see my contact information below.

Sincerely,
Jim French
Founder and Honorary President
North American Native Plant Society (NANPS)

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Telephone Markham: 905-477-3992

Spring and Early Summer Flowering Trees and Shrubs



WILD CRABAPPLE



WILD RAISIN



NINEBARK



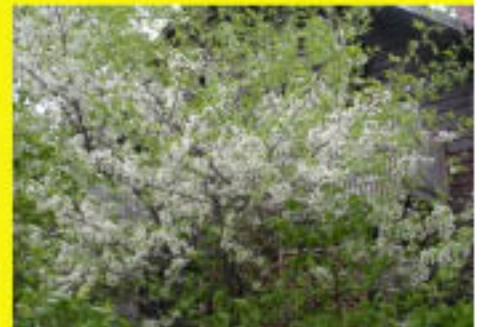
PAGODA TREE



CANADA PLUM



TIGER SWALLOW
TAIL ON HIGH BUSH
CRANBERRY



AMERICAN PLUM

Woodland Flowers and Ferns



TRILLIUMS AND BELLWORTS



FERMS AND MAYAPPLES



SHOWY LADY'S
SLIPPERS



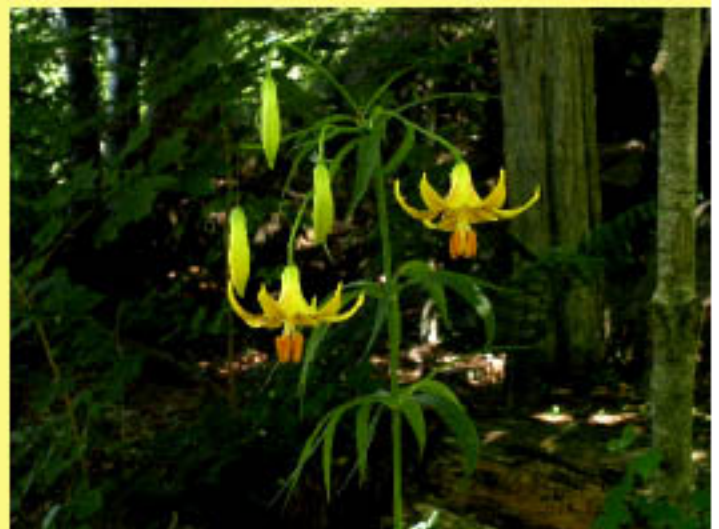
SMALL AND LARGE
LADY'S SLIPPERS



WILDFLOWER MIX



MICHIGAN LILY



CANADA LILY

An Elegant Water Feature



**GREEN FROG AND WHITE
WATER LILY**



MICHIGAN LILY



**MONARCH BUTTERFLY
ON IRONWEED FLOWER**



**GAIA AND SUMMER
FLOWERS**



**PINK AND WHITE
SHOOTING STARS,
YELLOW LADY'S SLIPPER**



**GARTER SNAKE ON
LILY PAD**

Exhibit 3

Native Prairie Gardens



NATIVE CACTUS



OJIBWAY PRAIRIE PROVINCIAL NATIVE RESERVE



LIATRIS

BLACK EYED SUSAN, PURPLE CONE FLOWER, LIATRIS



PRAIRIE CONEFLOWER



BUTTERFLY WEED

MISSOURI PRIMROSE

