

## Ottawa Butterfly Garden

It was St. Patrick's Day in 2017 when three Master Gardeners from LaSalle County attended a seminar in Bloomington on "Pollinators & Beneficial Insects - Habitat Planning, Management and Other Concerns". They walked away knowing they wanted to create a butterfly garden in their home city of Ottawa, Illinois. After acquiring a team of 14 people, they secured a location for the garden at the Corner of Canal and Madison Streets through negotiations with the City of Ottawa. After pondering all of the needs of butterflies, the team went on to design and install all needed items to have a successful butterfly garden. These items included a bird bath as a butterfly drinking station, terra cotta saucers that collect rainwater and essential minerals, protective shrubs and grasses for shelter, early blossoms for the early moths and butterflies, and of course perennial and annual flowers as a food source for monarchs and other butterflies. Visitors may sit on a bench and read through "Butter-flyers" located in a mailbox at the garden which provides educational information on a butterfly's life cycle, and how they can plant their own butterfly garden. The garden was recognized as a "Monarch Waystation" by the Monarch Watch Organization in 2018. The Master Gardener volunteer team also won a "Teamwork Award" at the Annual 2018 State Master Gardener Conference for this project.



**Above:** A view of the garden.

**Above Right:** Master Gardener Volunteer Jean Omolecki works at the Butterfly Garden in September 2019.

**Bottom Right:** The volunteer team poses at the garden for a group photo in 2018.