



City of Branson

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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MEDIA RELEASE

City Partners with Master Naturalists to Bring Back Monarch Butterflies

Branson, MO – Monarch butterfly populations have declined by 90% in the past two decades, and what used to be an annual migration of millions of butterflies through Branson has dwindled to nearly nothing in 2016. To promote awareness of this issue and provide the a natural habitat in hopes to save the Monarch butterfly, three local Master Naturalists secured 200 native milkweed plants from the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC) which are needed to provide host and nectar plants for the Monarch's vitality. Milkweed is the only plant on which a Monarch butterfly can lay its eggs – without it, the Monarch is at risk of extinction.



In partnership with the City of Branson, Master Naturalists Rose Atchley, Gala Keller and Sherryl Walker applied to receive 200 milkweed plants from the Department of Conservation. Upon notification of the award, the Master Naturalists identified seven public city-owned properties where these milkweed plants will be added to gardens so as to provide the necessary Monarch habitat: Branson Convention Center, City Hall, Lakeside Forest Wilderness Area, Firestations 2 and 3, the Recycle Center, and along walking trails at Stockstill Park.

The Missouri Master Naturalist™ program is a community-based natural resource education and volunteer service program for adults sponsored by MDC and the University of Missouri Extension. Its mission is to engage Missourians in the stewardship of our state's natural resources through science-based education and volunteer community service. Missouri Master Naturalist volunteers support conservation efforts and natural resource education in their local communities.

To become a certified Master Naturalist, participants must complete an initial training course and eight hours of advanced training, as well as contribute 40 hours of natural resource-related volunteer service through a local chapter.

Keller, Atchley and Walker are members of the Springfield Plateau Master Naturalists Chapter and will plan, design and coordinate planting when the milkweed plants arrive Branson late September or early October. A campaign entitled "Mayor's Milkweed for Monarchs" will take place on October 3, 2016 at which time City of Branson Mayor Karen Best will sign the "[Mayors Monarch Pledge](#)" declaring the city's support for Monarch initiatives and its commitment to eight or more action items. Mayor Best will also host a ceremonial milkweed planting paying tribute to St. Louis Mayor James Slay who signed the first

Monarch pledge and challenged other Midwest Mayors to help save the Monarch. To date, more than 186 Mayors have signed the Mayors for Monarch pledge.

More information on the Mayors for Monarchs initiative is found online at:
<http://monarchjointventure.org>

For regular news and information, visit the City of Branson website at www.BransonMO.Gov, and sign up to receive notification of regular news and updates via SMS/email at <http://mo-branson.civicplus.com/list.aspx>. “Follow” @CityOfBranson on Twitter, and “Like” us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/CityBranson and www.facebook.com/Branson.Missouri.9

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About the City of Branson, Missouri:

Located in Southwest Missouri, the City of Branson is committed to its citizens and to those who visit here, to ensure a safe and environmentally sound community. We will work as a team to maintain and promote the growth of our City, and to provide professional, courteous service to all through fair and open communication. We look to tomorrow, remembering yesterday, dedicated to excellence today.