

Pollinator party: Learn about monarch butterflies and more at Albion Hills Community Farm

By **Zachary Roman**

Pollinators play a pivotal part in the world's ecosystems.

That's why on August 12, the Albion Hills Community Farm (AHCF) is hosting an event all about monarch butterflies and other pollinators. The farm is located at 16555 Humber Station Rd. inside the Albion Hills Conservation Area.

The event begins at 10:30 a.m. with a farm tour, and at 11 a.m. residents are invited to meet the AHCF bees. At 11:30 a.m. there will be a presentation all about monarch butterflies and pollinators; and at 12 noon, there will be a workshop for the Caledon Butterflyway.

For those arriving in the afternoon, the farm tour, bee meet and pollinator presentation will repeat at 12:30, 1:00, and 1:30 p.m. respectively.

The AHCF farm stand will be selling fresh vegetables, fruit and more, for the duration of the event. There's going to be carrot cupcakes made with carrots from local farms for sale too.

Karen Hutchinson of the AHCF explained that while the pollinator event on August 12 is new, the AHCF has been working with pollinators since 2019.

The farm's volunteers obtained the necessary training and certification to rear monarch butterflies and have been doing so each year since. There has been steady work ongoing to create gardens specifically designed for pollinators at the farm too.

"We're trying to educate people on pollinators and at the same time, rear them and create habitats for them," said Hutchinson.

Hutchinson said whenever she gives a tour of the farm or hosts an event, people are always very interested in the farm's bees and monarch butterflies. Since there has been so much interest, she thought this summer would be the perfect time to launch an event dedicated to pollinators.

Monarch butterflies are an important indicator species, said Hutchinson, and she said at the August 12 event residents will have a chance to learn all about them - including their impressive migratory journey.

"We need pollinators to pollinate our food," said Hutchinson. "Our philosophy of farming is that we want to be sustainable; farm with nature not against it? we try to be ecologically and socially responsible."