

JULY 2017



LOCATION:
Heart Lake Conservation Area, Etobicoke Creek Watershed

DATE:
Tuesday July 25, 2017

REGION/MUNICIPALITY:
Region of Peel, City of Brampton

PARTNERS:
Toronto and Region Conservation, Region of Peel, City of Brampton

Want to know more? Click [HERE](#) to access TRCA's Medicine Wheel Garden Guide.



Pollinator Habitat and Hand Carved Benches Installed at the Medicine Wheel Garden (Gitgaan Mashkiki)

The concept of HLCA's Medicine Wheel Garden (Gitgaan Mashkiki) came as a vision from a male elder of the Anishnawbe Nation. Working together, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA), Peel Aboriginal Network (PAN), Heart Lake Community Action Area Group, Four Colours Drum Circle and the City of Brampton (CoB), created the Medicine Wheel Garden (Gitgaan Mashkiki) at Heart Lake Conservation Area (HLCA), a space for healing, celebration and peace.

The garden has four quadrants, each represented by four directions; east, south, west and north and four animals; eagle, turtle, buffalo and bear which are carved into benches. These original benches were worn due to weathering and insect damage. Working with a local elder and a talented local craftsman, new benches were hand carved using logs from the surrounding forest and set in place at each quadrant.

Pollinator species are declining globally and in an effort to help mitigate this problem, TRCA has been installing meadow plots, bird nesting structures and pollinator habitat structures within natural spaces.

New pollinator habitat structures installed this season are hexagonal structures which are built using reclaimed wood from ash trees damaged by emerald ash borer, an invasive non-native insect. Salvaged portions of the original benches were used as a base for the new structures which will provide much needed habitat for local native bees and other pollinator insects.

These hexagonal structures are filled with reclaimed bamboo from the Toronto Zoo, where it is used as the primary food source for the Giant Panda's. This hollow bamboo provides an ideal nesting area for these vital pollinators.



POSITIVE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

| # of benches placed | # of pollinator habitat structure | # of staff | Total Staff Hrs |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|------------|-----------------|
| 4 | 1 | 4 | 24 |