



Ottawa Field Naturalists' Club
Club des naturalistes d'Ottawa

2025

CONSERVATION AWARD, NON-MEMBER: OTTAWA WILDFLOWER SEED LIBRARY AND ITS BOARD

This award recognizes an outstanding contribution by a non-member (or group of non-members) in the cause of natural history conservation in the Ottawa Valley, with particular emphasis on activities within the Ottawa District (the area within 50 km of the Peace Tower)

Native plant gardens play an important role in natural history conservation. They provide support to native wildlife, especially pollinators; help preserve biodiversity; strengthen ecosystem health and climate resilience; and serve as living examples of local natural history, encouraging stewardship of the land.

The Ottawa Wildflower Seed Library (OWSL) is a grassroots organization, created in 2020, that promotes gardening with native plants to provide food and habitat for bees, butterflies, insects, birds, and other wildlife. The organization's vision is to inspire communities to build interconnected, ecologically robust native plant habitats – one plant, one person at a time.

It is both a lending library – providing free access to seeds and plants that people can use to grow in their own gardens, and a receiving library – allowing people to “return” some seeds once the plants have flowered and gone to seed.

In 2024-2025, OWSL provided almost 5,000 community projects, schools and individuals with free native seeds, the majority in the Ottawa area, but also in Ontario, Québec, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Over 100,000 seed packages were donated, from 265 different species. In addition, more than 2,500 people attended their workshops, presentations and outreach events over the same time period.

Indigenous reconciliation is a core value for OWSL, with policies to ensure the ongoing involvement of Indigenous individuals and communities in the organization. In 2025, the OWSL created and delivered 2,008 Red Columbine (*Aquilegia canadensis*) seed packets for the Ottawa public libraries to distribute across the city for National Truth and Reconciliation Day.

The organization's website allows individuals to order seeds online, as well as provides significant information and resources on how to prepare, design and plant a native plant garden.

Many people who have started a native garden report seeing more birds, pollinators, moths, frogs and toads etc. in their gardens, even in very urban settings. These gardens act as small but powerful conservation spaces that protect nature, support wildlife, and promote sustainable relationships between people and their local environments.

For their ongoing work to provide free seeds, knowledge and encouragement of responsible gardening, the OFNC is proud to present its Conservation Non-Member Award to the Ottawa Wildflower Seed Library and its Board.

Prepared by Rita Kloosterman

