

## BGOSS Family Rearing Program 2018

Chris and Sarah Poole

Late in 2017 Kerry Jarvis submitted to the Ministry of Natural Resources an "Application for a Wildlife Scientific Collectors Authorization for 2018 & 2019." The application included the names of ten families who would participate in the capture, rearing and release program for Monarch Butterflies.

Kerry Jarvis and Melitta Smole founders of the Butterfly Gardens of Saugeen Shores have been instrumental in establishing the butterfly gardens you see throughout our beautiful community.

In June of 2018, Kerry approached me to see if my daughter Sarah and I would like to be the coordinators for the Family rearing program. On July 12 we met with the other nine families, discussed the intent of the program and passed out the new butterfly nets and clip boards.

Over the course of the next three months, eight out of ten families released ninety-four adult Monarch Butterflies. Although we had the eggs and caterpillars in ideal conditions free from predators, we still had some mortality. The mortality rate was far below what the eggs and caterpillars would have experienced in the wild.

We did learn that as the caterpillars enter their final stage, they are ferocious eaters. They will eat every piece of milk weed in its path including the very small eggs on the leaves.

Watching the caterpillar morph into its final stage is a remarkable experience. Its one thing to watch it on YouTube and yet something else to see it in real life. Releasing the butterflies can be a challenge full of fun!



We have had a very successful first year for the program. For 2019, we are looking at a possible work shop to build rearing habitats capitalizing on some of the lessons we learned from 2018.