


For the Council Meeting to be held on: June 02, 2014	Submitted by: Rod Tapp A.E.A.C. 	For: Action	Agenda Item #
Subject: "Official Town Tree/Flower"			

## **BACKGROUND:**

Council permitted the Aylmer Environmental Advisory Committee (AEAC) to complete research and recommend for consideration, adoption of an official "Town Tree".

Council also permitted the AEAC to advertise, promote and hold a contest to recommend a "Flower" for consideration for adoption as an official "Town Flower".

Both, the tree and flower species being considered for adoption are to be native species to Canada.

## **ANALYSIS:**

### **Town Tree**

The AEAC completed research on several native tree species that grow and flourish within the Town and surrounding area and unanimously chose the "American Sycamore" Tree (*Platanus occidentalis*) for Council's consideration for adoption as the Town of Aylmer's "Official Tree".

Details of the "American Sycamore Tree" (*Platanus occidentalis*) being recommended are as follows:

- The sycamore grows native throughout the Catfish Creek Conservation watershed.
- There is an abundance of sycamore trees growing within the Town's parklands, woodlots as well as on privately owned lands.
- The tree's range extends from Iowa to Ontario and Maine in the north.
- Typically grows up to 30 to 40 m (98 to 131 ft.) in height.
- Has exfoliating bark which flakes, leaving the surface mottled, and greenish-white, gray & brown.
- Sometimes referred to the Buttonwood.
- The tree's wood is commonly used for furniture, interior finishes of houses and for butchers blocks.

(see pictures and additional information attached)

## Town Flower

The AEAC advertised, promoted and held a two phase contest to recommend a "Flower" for consideration for adoption as an official "Town Flower".

### First Phase:

The AEAC advertised and held a contest open to the public and area schools to receive possible flower selections. The criterion for the contest was as follows:

- Contest was open to all local area schools and the public within Aylmer & local area.
- Contestants/Groups/Classrooms wishing to participate provided submissions within a designated timeline containing the following:
  - Type/species of flower (must be a native species) that they would like to see represent the Town of Aylmer along with a picture and a paragraph describing the species of flower, where it grows, when it flowers and why it would be a good choice for the Town.

The AEAC received four entries of which two met the contest criteria.

### *Second Phase:*

Upon review, the AEAC included the two eligible entries received and added two additional flower selections as recommended by the AEAC bringing the total to four possible selections for the Town Flower.

The four flower selections were as follows:

- ❖ False Sunflower (*Heliopsis helianthoides*)
- ❖ Purple Cone Flower (*Echinacea purpurea*)
- ❖ Silk Plant (*Asclepias tuberosa*)
- ❖ Tick Seed (*Coreopsis lanceolata*)

The AEAC advertised and promoted "Pick the Town Flower Contest" at the Aylmer Home & Garden Show (April 25, 26, 27, 2014), whereby the public was invited to fill out a ballot (eligible to win a Back Yard Composter) and pick the flower of their choice from the four entries that they wanted to see as the "Official Town Flower".

The AEAC received 242 ballots (7 no-votes) in total and the results were as follows:

- 1.) 61 votes - Purple Cone Flower (*Echinacea purpurea*)
- 2.) 42 votes - Tick Seed (*Coreopsis lanceolata*)
- 3.) 47 votes - False Sunflower (*Heliopsis helianthoides*)
- 4.) 85 votes - Silk Plant (*Asclepias tuberosa*)

Entry # 4 with 85 votes received - Silk Plant (*Asclepias tuberosa*) was the Flower that the public picked as the Flower of choice.

The winner of the contest (Back Yard Composter) was Ms. E. Vindasius of Aylmer.

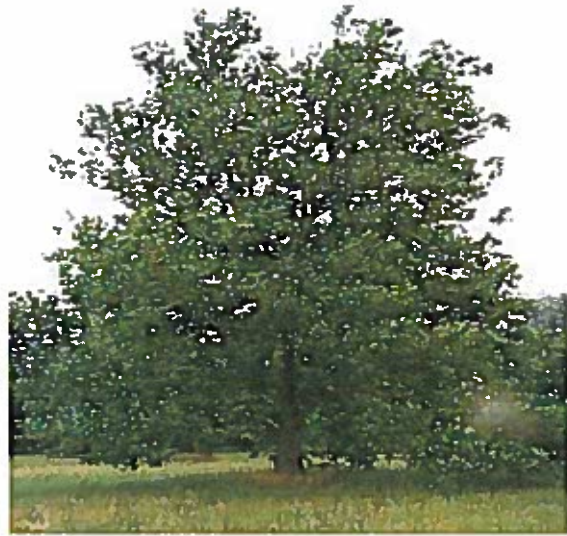
Details of the "Silk Plant" (*Asclepias tuberosa*) being recommended are as follows:

- The Silk Plant is native to eastern North America.
- A perennial plant growing to 0.3 - 1.0 metre.
- Clustered orange or yellow flowers from early summer to early fall.
- Drought tolerant.
- Favours dry sand or gravel soil, but can also be found on stream margins.
- Requires full sun.
- Butterflies are attracted to the plant by its colour and its copious production of nectar.
- Larval food plant of the "Queen" & "Monarch" butterflies.
- Hummingbirds, bees and other insects are also attracted.

(see pictures and additional information attached)

### **Recommendations:**

Council endorses the Report including recommendations by the AEAC & staff and furthermore officially adopts by Council Resolution the "American Sycamore Tree" (*Platanus occidentalis*) as the Town of Aylmer's "Official Tree" and the "Silk Plant" (*Asclepias tuberosa*) as the Town of Aylmer's "Official Flower".



## ***Platanus occidentalis* American Sycamore**

**A sycamore can typically reaching up to 30 to 40 m (98 to 131 ft) high.**

**Exfoliating bark which flakes leaving the surface mottled, and greenish-white, gray and brown. Sometimes referred to as Buttonwood.**

**The range extends from Iowa to Ontario and Maine in the north.**

**Grows native throughout the Catfish Conservation water shed.**

**Wood used for furniture and interior finish of houses, butcher's blocks.**

















***Asclepias tuberosa* Silk plant**

native to eastern North America

A perennial plant growing to 0.3–1 metre

Clustered orange or yellow flowers from early summer to early Fall. Drought tolerant.

This plant favors dry, sand or gravel soil, but has also been reported on stream margins. It requires full sun.

Butterflies that are attracted to the plant by its color and its copious production of nectar. It is also the larval food plant of the Queen and Monarch butterflies. Hummingbirds, bees and other insects are also attracted.







