

Highlights of the Thursday, 15 January, 2026 Weekly Meeting

President Maureen welcomed everyone including our speaker for today, Kim Hutton, Master Gardener, to the Kiwanis Club of Brantford's meeting for Thursday, 08-January, 2026.

President Maureen called Phil Hoekstra to present the 50/50 Draw with Linda Moyer and Ken McNaughton holding potential winning ticket, but neither were able to find the "Joker".



President Maureen called Paul Simon to come forward as this week's Funmaster.

Funmaster Paul came forward and made his introduction to a Video presentation relating to "Spaghetti Westerns" and the Ukulele Orchestra of Great Britain, but due to technical difficulties, the video will have to be presented at a later date.

Paul moved on to the Birthday's and Anniversaries of joining the Club.



January Birthday's

Randy MacKenzie	17
Bonnie Little	18

Anniversaries of Joining the Club

Linda Moyer	7 Years
Randy MacKenzie	24 Years
Bob Wade	38 Years

Paul called for any Happy Stories.

- Kirby Brown was happy that he and his son were able to participate in the "Grand Spiel" at the Brant Curling Club. January 9th - 11th

President Maureen thanked Funmaster Paul and called Bob Saunders to introduce our guest speaker, Kim Hutton, Master Gardener.

Bob Saunders came to the podium and gave the following introduction.

Today I have the pleasure of introducing Kimberly Hutton.

Kim is a lifelong resident of the Grand River watershed and has a deep respect for animal health, ecological balance, and responsible land care in all her work.

Kim has a University of Guelph Horticulture Certificate in Natural Landscape Management and is currently completing her studies for a Diploma in Ecological Design.



She is actively involved with the Grand Erie Master Gardeners, volunteering her time to educate the public on science-based gardening practices using native plants.

Kim also collaborates with municipal partners and community groups to design native plant gardens that support pollinators, wildlife, and long-term environmental resilience.

Through her work as a land steward, educator, and volunteer, Kim is passionate about helping communities understand how small, thoughtful actions can have a meaningful environmental impact.

Kiwanians gave a warm welcome to Kim Hutton.

Kim Hutton greeted everyone, particularly for making it through the amount of snow and poor road conditions we had. Kim's Topic was, "Inviting Nature into Urban Gardens." Kim started with the statement that, the majority of our population live, "inside" and feel disconnected from Nature.

Kim emphasised the fact that we as humans, have an innate love for or strong connection to life and nature. The term for this is "biophilia" and suggests humans have a biological need to connect with nature, influencing our well-being, and leading to practices like biophilic design that incorporate natural elements (plants, light, wood, water) into built environments to reduce stress and improve health.



Kim highlighted planting urban trees, increasing community green spaces, utilising brownfield sites and building sustainable drainage systems as effective nature-based solutions in cities to improve wellbeing, bring economic benefit, increase biodiversity and fight climate change.

Any space, no matter how small, has value and can have a major contribution to environmental wellbeing.

Putting a plant in your garden acts as a beacon for various insects and wildlife by providing essential food (nectar, pollen, berries, foliage) and shelter. The specific visitors depend on the type of plant, but generally, plants attract pollinators, beneficial insects, and local wildlife.



Pollinators (Bees, Butterflies, Hummingbirds)

Flowers with bright colors and strong scents, such as sunflowers, coneflowers, salvia, and lavender, are major attractors for:

- Bees: Honey bees, bumblebees, and native solitary bees.
- Butterflies: Moths and butterflies (e.g., Milkweed specifically attracts Monarchs).
- Hummingbirds: Attracted to red, orange, and pink tubular flowers like bee balm, columbine, and honeysuckle.

Beneficial Insects (Natural Pest Control)

Fragrant herbs and flowers like dill, fennel, marigolds, and alyssum attract insects that eat common garden pests:

- **Ladybugs:** Feed on aphids.
- **Hoverflies:** Larvae consume aphids.
- **Parasitic Wasps:** Lay eggs in caterpillars (like hornworms).
- **Lacewings:** Eat aphids and mites.

Wildlife (Birds and Small Mammals)

Plants, particularly shrubs, trees, and those with seed heads, provide food and shelter for:

- **Songbirds:** Finches, sparrows, and cardinals are drawn to seed-bearing plants like sunflowers, echinacea, and rudbeckia.
- **Berried-eating birds:** Robins, waxwings, and blue jays are attracted to shrubs like dogwood, elderberry, and holly.
- **Small Mammals:** Squirrels, chipmunks, and rabbits may be attracted to the shelter and food provided by trees and shrubs.



Following are a few slides that Kim used to highlight some of her wealth of knowledge and talent.

With **humanity now spending 90% of its time indoors**, our **disconnection from nature** is driving a cascade of crises—from rising **mental health struggles** to **shorter lifespans** and a bleak outlook for future generations.

This separation also leaves us more vulnerable to the intensifying impacts of extreme weather. But awareness is growing.

Increasingly, we see how nature can heal, restore, and strengthen our communities. All it needs is a little help.

Mental and Physical Health Advantages



Stress Reduction
Green spaces help reduce stress levels by providing calm and natural surroundings for urban residents.

Mood Improvement
Spending time in nature boosts mood and emotional well-being for city dwellers.

Physical Activity Encouragement
Green spaces encourage exercise and physical activity that promote health and fitness.

Overall Well-being
Access to nature enhances overall well-being and quality of life for urban residents.

Environmental Impact and Ecosystem Services



Temperature Regulation
Green spaces in cities reduce heat by providing shade and cooling, mitigating urban heat island effects.

Nadine Galle - Heat Domes vs shade
Recorded surface temp 48°C of green walls during a heat dome versus a wall without vegetation at 69°C.

Vegetation Cools.
p.58 *The Nature of Our Cities*

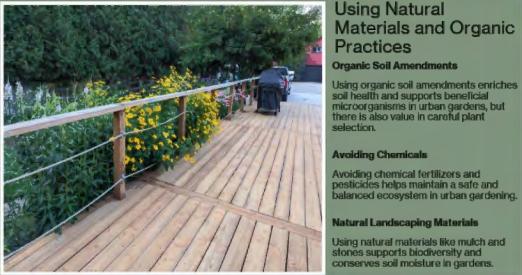
Stormwater Management
Natural areas manage rainwater runoff, reducing flooding and improving water quality in urban environments.

Carbon Sequestration
Plants in urban areas absorb carbon dioxide, helping to reduce greenhouse gases and combat climate change.

Practical Ways to Bring Nature Into City Gardens



Using Natural Materials and Organic Practices



Organic Soil Amendments
Using organic soil amendments enriches soil health and supports beneficial microorganisms in urban gardens, but there is also value in careful plant selection.

Avoiding Chemicals
Avoiding chemical fertilizers and pesticides helps maintain a safe and balanced ecosystem in urban gardening.

Natural Landscaping Materials
Using natural materials like mulch and stones supports biodiversity and conserves soil moisture in gardens.



Incorporating Water Features and Shelters

Water Sources for Wildlife
Small ponds and birdbaths offer vital hydration points for various wildlife species in gardens and natural habitats.

Sheltered Areas for Refuge
Shelters provide essential refuge for wildlife, protecting them from harsh weather and predators, promoting biodiversity.



Guidelines for Maintaining Harmony with Neighbors



Responsible Pest Management
Managing pests responsibly ensures a healthy environment and prevents conflicts between neighbors.

- Vegetable and Food Gardening
- Prized Ornamentals vs. native plants

Effective Communication
Open communication about plans and activities fosters trust and positive neighbor relationships. This is where



Collaborative Green Spaces and Community Gardens

Access to Green Space
Community gardens increase access to green spaces in urban areas for recreation and relaxation.

Social Interaction
Gardens foster social connections among community members through shared activities and collaboration.

Urban Biodiversity
These spaces enhance urban biodiversity by supporting diverse plants and attracting wildlife.



Kim closed-off her presentation and spend time answering questions for interested members.

Kim Hutton was thanked on behalf of the Club by Leo Vos and given a hearty round of applause for her presentation.



President Maureen called for Committee Reports and Announcements:

- Pallo Sahota announced that: Saturday, February 7, 2026, was the Kiwanis Club of Guelph Music Festival Gala. Rsvp By: January 26, 2026. Sign Up Sheet Available at our Lunch Meetings or Email to: thompson834@icloud.com .

Nelson McClinchey mentioned that Chris Bisson is having a Pre-cocktail Social at his home. Contant Nelson if you are interested. nelsonmcclinchey@gmail.com

President Maureen, thanked all members and guest speaker Kim Hutton and wished everyone well.

Closing Thought for the Day: Yesterday is but a dream, tomorrow but a vision. But today well lived makes every yesterday a dream of happiness, and every tomorrow a vision of hope. Look well, therefore, to this day." Indian Proverb.

President Maureen asked If there was anything else for the good of Kiwanis, seeing none, she adjourned the meeting with the ringing of the Bell.