

Bulletin

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for Educators

The Indiana Department of Environmental Management's (IDEM) mission is to protect the environment and human health. IDEM ensures Indiana's land is safe to live on, air is safe to breathe, and water is safe to drink. IDEM's environmental educator is a resource for you!

Featured Program



Schoolyard Habitats

Biodiversity is a crucial part of a healthy ecosystem. Although the survival of many species is threatened, there are ways all of us can help! In this issue, IDEM is featuring the National Wildlife Federation's Schoolyard Habitats program, which equips educators with the tools they need to create and maintain wildlife habitats at their schools. This exciting program aids in increasing biodiversity and providing needed habitat for wildlife while enriching students' understanding of wildlife species, ecosystems, and sustainability. Schoolyard habitats become outdoor classrooms where students can explore their curiosity and creativity. Please [review the planning guide](#) to learn more about this program and how it incorporates science, technology, engineering, arts, and math (STEAM) learning.

To help cover the cost, schools can apply for grant funding through Indiana's Community Recycling Grant Program starting Fall 2023. For more information, please [visit the program's website](#).

Topics to Share

May is American Wetlands Month!

Wetlands provide important ecological services, such as:

- Water filtration, which cleans the water,
- Water storage, which reduces flooding; and
- Critical habitat, on which many endangered species rely.

Since the 1600's, the US has lost roughly 50% of its wetlands. Today, wetlands cover less than 4% of Indiana, compared to 25% in the early 1700s. Educating students on the importance of wetlands is a crucial step in protecting them.

IDEM will host classroom presentations May 15-26, 2023, in honor of American Wetlands Month. Please email education@idem.IN.gov to request a presentation.



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Upcoming Events You Can Find Us At:

**2023 Hoosier Association
of Science Teachers, Inc.
(HASTI) Conference**
February 13-14, 2023

Earth Day Indiana Festival
June 3, 2023

Classroom Presentations

IDEM offering classroom and virtual Earth Day webinar presentations.

IDEM will host classroom and virtual Earth Day webinar presentations on April 3-28, 2023, that cover the following topics: water, land, and air quality, and recycling.

To learn more about the programs, to register to attend a virtual webinar presentation, or to request a classroom presentation, visit idem.IN.gov/iee.



Craft Corner

Make an Ice Suncatcher

Making an ice suncatcher is a fun and easy way to enjoy the winter weather. To get started, go for a hike outside and search for natural treasures – sticks, leaves, rocks, etc. You can also use seeds or fruit. Then, arrange your items in a pan, add water, and freeze. Then you can hang them outside. Don't forget that your ice suncatcher will melt, so be sure to use items that are environmentally friendly.

Instructions:

1. Arrange nature treasures in the container.
2. Fill the container with water.
3. Add the ribbon halfway into the pan.
4. Freeze for four hours or longer.
5. Remove the container from the freezer.
6. After 15 minutes, remove the ice suncatcher from the container.
7. Hang outside!

For this craft, you will need:

- A container such as a cake pan, ice cube tray, food storage, etc.
- Small rocks, sticks, leaves, seeds, fruit, etc.
- Ribbon or yarn
- Water
- Food coloring (optional)



Resources

Aluminum: A Recycling Story

IDEM offers a free online storybook about recycling that contains fun illustrations and highlights an aluminum can's life cycle when recycled properly. Spoiler alert: Aluminum can be recycled over and over (and over) again!

Download the online recycling storybook can be found at idem.IN.gov/iee.



Free Earth Day Posters

IDEM has free 18" X 24" posters available for the classroom or workplace. If you would like to receive a poster, please email education@idem.IN.gov.



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Indiana Department of
Environmental Management