



St. Joseph  
County  
Soil & Water  
Conservation  
District



**Today's Visions for Tomorrow's Future**

March/April 2020  
Volume 22, Issue 2

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**What's Going On...**

*Events hosted by the St. Joseph County SWCD  
& Our Partners in Conservation*

**March**

**17 - Monthly Board Meeting** - Open to the Public 7:00 pm LOCATION: North Liberty Library, 105 E. Market St., North Liberty, IN 46554.

**April**

**10 - Good Friday - County Holiday**

**21 - Monthly Board Meeting** - Open to the Public 6:30 PM LOCATION: Butterfly Room, Centre Township Library at Kern and Miami Roads in South Bend - 1150 Kern Road South Bend.



INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF  
**PLANT HEALTH**  
2020

The United Nations declared 2020 as the International Year of Plant Health (IYPH). Please join us in this once in a lifetime opportunity and help protect the world's crops, forests, gardens, and landscapes against invasive pests. When we protect plant health, we protect the food we eat, the air we breathe, and the environment in which we live. In short, protecting plant health protects people.

**The St Joseph County SWCD Celebrated 60 Years at Annual Meeting**

The St Joseph County SWCD was joined by 210 residents, producers, landowners, and conservation partners. A special thank you goes to Indiana State Senator David Niezgodski, Indiana State Representative Ross Deal, and St. Joseph County Commissioner Dave Thomas for joining us!

Chad Pregracke was our keynote speaker and gave an inspirational talk on how one person can make a difference. Pregracke started as a one man operation as a teenager that has now turned in to a non profit organization; Living Lands and Waters, that has several employees and 117,328 volunteers. To date they have removed 10,726,065 pounds of trash out of the Mississippi, Ohio, Illinois, Missouri and other surrounding US rivers. They have also planted an astounding 1,312,126 trees. To learn more about Pregracke and his organization, visit their website; [www.livinglandsandwaters.org](http://www.livinglandsandwaters.org).

**Thank you Speaker Sponsors**

**Platinum Sponsor**

Farm Credit Mid-America

**Silver Sponsors**

1st Source Bank, 3130 Equipment Co., Bellman Oil Company, Andy Beutter - Farm Bureau Insurance, Joe & Dorene Graff, Helena Chemical, Keith Lineback - Schrader Real Estate & Auction

**Bronze Sponsor**

Bane Welker Equipment, Geyer Construction Co., Green Mark Equipment, Lehman & Lehman, McCormick Electrical Services, Inc., Prairie Winds Nature Farms, Shoemaker Welding



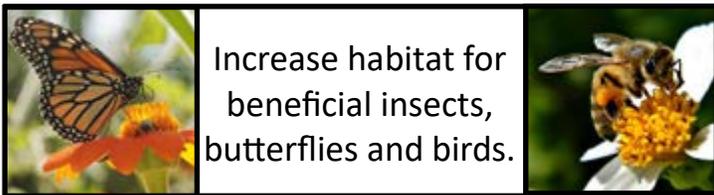
**Affiliate Sponsor** - Nancy & Gary Beall, Peter Holmgren, Ritschard Brothers Inc., D&D Stoner Farms, Randy & Cindi Stoner, Stoner Farms, Zahl's Elevator & Feed Mill

**Thank you to our 60th Anniversary Notebook Sponsor** - Red Hen Turf Farm

# RAIN GARDENS

Rain Gardens help reduce rainwater runoff and improve water quality. Rain Gardens are attractive additions to your yard, and they collect and slow stormwater run off and increase its infiltration into the soil. By helping to reduce the rapid flow of stormwater from homes and businesses to storm drains, Rain Gardens protect streams, rivers, and lakes from pollutants that are washed from impervious surfaces. Up to 70% of pollution in streams, rivers, and lakes comes from stormwater runoff!

A Rain Garden is NOT a garden that has standing water, even though its name kind of sounds like it. Rather, Rain Gardens are gardens that contain flowering plants and grasses (preferably native species of both) that can survive in soil soaked with water from rain water.

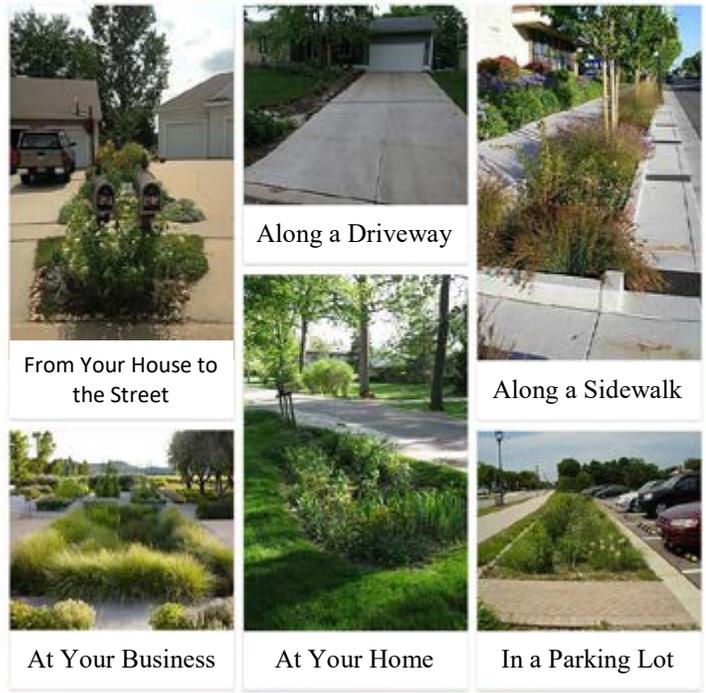


### A raingarden is NOT:

- ◆ A retention pond
- ◆ Designed to hold water for over 24 hours
- ◆ A wetland
- ◆ A haven for mosquitos



### where can a raingarden go?



Rain gardens are an extremely effective way to reduce water pollution. Rain gardens act like native forests, storing, filtering and releasing cool, clean water to streams and rivers. Studies have shown that streets with rain gardens can stop 90% or more of the pollutants running off of roads, driveways and other hard surfaces.

### For more information about Rain Gardens:

- ◆ Visit our Rain Gardens page on our website: [www.stjosephswcd.org/rain-gardens](http://www.stjosephswcd.org/rain-gardens)
- ◆ Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources [www.dnr.wi.gov/topic/Stormwater/raingarden](http://www.dnr.wi.gov/topic/Stormwater/raingarden)
- ◆ University of Wisconsin Extension - downloadable 32 page PDF guide; "Rain Gardens: A How-to Manual for Homeowners". [www.dnr.wi.gov/topic/shorelandzoning/documents/rgmanual.pdf](http://www.dnr.wi.gov/topic/shorelandzoning/documents/rgmanual.pdf)
- ◆ Rainscaping.org - Imitating Nature with Rain Gardens [www.livewellandgreen.org/rainscaping-org](http://www.livewellandgreen.org/rainscaping-org)
- ◆ Blue Thumb - Planting for Clean Water - book and online resource for all things Rain Gardens. [www.bluthumb.org/raingardens/](http://www.bluthumb.org/raingardens/)

# PLANTING NATIVES

Planting native plants reduces the need for fertilizers and watering since they are adapted to our climate and soils. They typically thrive with less care than non-native species. Planting native plants will also increase habitat for beneficial insects, butterflies and birds that feed on and/or deter pests and invasive insects.

## Pesticides and their impact on natural habitats

Did you know that as much as 1/3 of our food supply relies on the work of bees and other pollinators? By planting native plants, they will not only feed the pollinators, but it also provides shelter in the form of nest sites, host sites for caterpillars and places for pollinators to overwinter safely. "Along with new habitat, pollinators need protection from pesticides. Thoughtful pest management efforts work to reduce pesticide use and mitigate risks when pesticides are used. Such efforts can enhance the value of pollinator habitat and serve communities, offering a variety of benefits such as keeping children safe and protecting water quality."<sup>3</sup>

## Why should I care about invasives?

According to the USDA US Forest Service, an invasive species is defined as a "non-native (or alien) to the ecosystem under consideration; and, whose introduction causes or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health."<sup>4</sup>

- ◆ Invasive plants cost money. A 2012 survey of 120 agencies and landowners in Indiana found we spent \$5.7 million to manage these species and protect our natural areas. Nationally, control costs due to invasive plants are estimated at \$15 billion per year. Each year the cost grows.<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ Invasive plants hurt wildlife by crowding out the plants our native animals need for food and cover.<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ Most invasive shrubs and trees are little used by native insects. This reduces habitat for beneficial pollinators and predatory insects, as well as reduces the amount of food available for birds to feed their nestlings.<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ Invasive plants destroy habitat for rare wildflowers and animals, threatening two-thirds of all endangered species.<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ Invasive plants can become weedy in a home garden, crowding out other landscaping.<sup>1</sup>
- ◆ Invasive plants can also decrease your ability to enjoy hunting, fishing, mushroom collecting, bird-watching, and many other recreational pursuits by crowding forest floors and choking waterways, making use of these areas difficult.<sup>1</sup>

Sources: 1. [www.growindiananatives.org](http://www.growindiananatives.org), 2. *The Blue Thumb Guide to Raingardens* by Rusty Schmidt, Dan Shaw and David Dods. 3. [www.xerces.org](http://www.xerces.org) 4. [www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/invasives/index.shtml](http://www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/invasives/index.shtml)



**Butterfly Weed**, Its brilliant orange flowers attract butterflies. Because its tough root was chewed by the Native Americans as a cure for pleurisy and other pulmonary ailments, Butterfly Weed was given its other common name, Pleurisy Root. Although it is sometimes called Orange Milkweed, this species has no milky sap.

**Little Bluestem**, This mid-prairie species gets its name from the bluish color of the stem bases in the spring, but most striking is the plants reddish-tan color in fall, persisting through winter snows. The seeds, fuzzy white at maturity, are of particular value to small birds in winter.



**Elderberry**, Provides nesting materials and structure for native bees. Supports conservation biological control (attracts predatory insects that prey upon

pest insects). This plant was used by Native Americans for many medicinal purposes. The purple-black fruit is attractive to birds that spread the seeds. The fruit makes tasty jelly and wine. Provides effective erosion control on moist sites.

**Lady Fern**, light-green color with finely toothed leaflets create the illusion of a dainty fern, despite its large size. Stems are greenish-yellow to red.



**Purple Coneflower**, A popular perennial with smooth, 2-5 ft. stems and long-lasting, lavender flowers, a showy, easily grown garden plant, attract butterflies and hummingbirds

**The list above is 5 plant species that are native to Indiana. For a complete list of Indiana native plants visit these resources:**

- ◆ [www.indianawildlife.org/wildlife/native-plants](http://www.indianawildlife.org/wildlife/native-plants)
- ◆ [www.plantnative.org](http://www.plantnative.org) - search for Indiana under the Regional Plant List.



Visit us on Facebook 2903 GARY DRIVE PLYMOUTH IN 46563

# St. Joseph County Soil And Water Conservation Partnership

Visit our office to receive your free wildlife food plot seeds! All seeds are on a first come first serve basis while supplies last. We will have the following seeds and mixes available starting March 16:

### Sunflower Seeds

#### Annual Cover Crop Pollinator Mix

- 20% Hairy Vetch      15% Cowpea
- 15% Buckwheat      14% Crimson Clover
- 10% Partridge Pea    10% Annual Sunflower
- 8% Berseem Clover    8% Rapeseed

#### Annual Habitat Hide-A-Way Mix

- 60% Green Sugar TR Brand Sorghum
- 30% Wildlife Grain Sorghum
- 10% Wildlife Sunflowers



#### Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) Supervisors:

- John Dooms, Chair
- Jeremy Cooper, Vice Chair
- Mike Burkholder
- Dave Vandewalle
- Dave Craft

#### St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation Partnership Staff:

- Sarah Longenecker, SWCD
- Sandra Hoffarth, SWCD
- Debbie Knepp, NRCS

#### Farm Service Agency Staff:

- Gideon Nobbe, CED
- Aldona Martin
- Tara Wolfe
- Devan Herrell
- Katie Leitch

#### SWCD Associate Supervisors:

- Jim LaFree
- Chuck Lehman
- Randy Matthys
- Richard Schmidt
- Dave Straughn
- Dru Wrasse

#### SWCD Honorary Members:

- Jerry Knepp
- Keith Lineback
- William Millar



Scan me to go Green!

Are you ready to "GO GREEN" and help us save money and natural resources? We can deliver your "Conservation Kaleidoscope" newsletter by email ... Give us a call or send us an email and tell us you'd like to "GO GREEN" THANK YOU!!!!