St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District

CONSERVATION KALEIDOSCOPE

Today's Visions for Tomorrow's Future

May/June 2019
Volume 21, Issue 3

2903 Gary Drive, Ste 1, Plymouth, IN 46563
Website: stjosephswcd.org

Telephone (574) 936-2024
e-mail: info@stjosephswcd.org

What's Going On...

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

May

7 - Primary Election Day County Holiday

21 - Monthly Board Meeting - Open to the Public 7:00 PM LOCATION: Alligator Room Centre Township Library at Kern and Miami Roads in South Bend - 1150 Kern Road South Bend, IN 46614

27 - Memorial Day office closed

South Bend's Best Week Ever is the first week of June. Here are the events we will be participating in! www.bestweekever2019.com

May 29th - "Get the dirt on Urban Soil Health" at Purple Porch Co-op's Best Week Ever Launch Party & 10 Year Anniversary, 123 North Hill St., South Bend, time TBA.

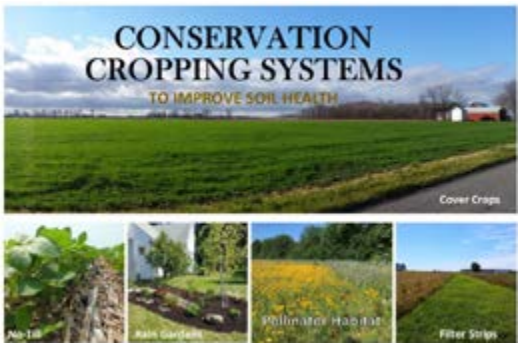
June 2nd "Create a Pollinator House" at Rebel Art Fest in Potawatomi Park, 2105 E Mishawaka Ave, South Bend, Time TBA.

June

17-23—National Pollinator Week see page 2 for details.

18 - Monthly Board Meeting - Open to the Public 7:00 PM LOCATION: Alligator Room Centre Township Library at Kern and Miami Roads in South Bend - 1150 Kern Road South Bend, IN 46614

Have You Heard? ...
St Joseph County SWCD Has Cost Share Funds Available



The St. Joseph County SWCD offers conservation cost share to implement best management practices (BMP's) to improve soil health and water quality. These BMP's also help to reduce erosion, improve air quality and wildlife habitat.

Some projects the district has helped with in the past few years are:

- **2015 - Prevented Planting Cover Crop Cost Share.** We assisted producers who had cropland that was flooded and were unable to plant crops in the spring/summer of 2015. By planting a cover crop they armored the bare soil. This helped prevent erosion, increase water infiltration, and fed the soil biology.
- **2016 - Pollinator Habitat planting.** This native forb (wildflower) planting has not only benefited our hardworking pollinators but has and continues to encourage others to plant native forbs as well! Pesticide use and lack of habitat have led to a decline in pollinator population. Getting pollinator habitats established is a priority practice that benefits us all!
- **2016 - Livestock pipeline.** Approximately 125' of livestock pipeline was installed to help establish a rotational grazing system. While 125' doesn't seem like a lot, this length was just the beginning run of pipeline to be installed to facilitate a rotational grazing plan to keep the soil, forage, and cattle healthy.
- **2016-2018 - Clean Water Indiana Grant (CWI)** We utilized this grant to cost share 853.2 acres of cover crops, 270.7 acres of no-till and 3.4 acres of pollinator habitat in St. Joseph County. We also cost shared the installation of 9 demonstration and 3 residential raingardens.

If you are thinking about trying one or more of these practices, chances are we have a program that provides financial assistance to help. Programs are just one tool that the Soil & Water Conservation District and our partner USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can offer. Even if you are not interested in financial incentives, you can still receive our free technical assistance, including whole farm conservation planning. Technical assistance does not have to be tied to a program.

Some conservation practices we can help you with are; cover crops, no-till, buffers such as filter strips or riparian buffers, pollinator habitat establishment, raingardens or rotational grazing. Contact our County Conservationist, Sarah Longenecker, or NRCS's District Conservationist, Debbie Knepp, for an application. Due to the limited nature of funds, the SWCD reserves the right to deny funds to high cost/benefit ratio projects.

Gardening for Pollinators

By: Rosie Lerner, Extension Consumer Horticulture Specialist, Purdue University

Pollinators are all the "buzz" these days with a federal proclamation designating June 17-23, 2019 as National Pollinator Week. The focus of this event is to promote the health of pollinators who are so critical to food and ecosystems.

It may surprise you to learn that the honeybee is native to Europe and was introduced to the US. But there are also numerous other pollinator species including native bees, butterflies and moths, beetles, birds and bats. Many pollinators have suffered from loss of habitat, chemical misuse, diseases and parasites.

Gardeners play a critical role in the nurturing and conservation of both native and introduced pollinators. Gardens and landscapes provide pollinators with food, water, shelter and habitat to complete their life cycles. Urban areas typically feature large areas of pavement and buildings and offer little in the way of food or shelter for pollinators – garden plantings can help bridge the gap.

Honeybees and other pollinators need protein from flower pollen and carbohydrates from flower nectar. Plan to provide a variety of different types of flowers, and aim to have three different flower species in bloom throughout the growing season. Showy colorful flowers and massed groups of flowers particularly in small gardens provide efficient feeding stations for the pollinators. Flowering trees and shrubs also provide excellent food sources.

Pollinators also need shelter from wind, scorching sun and heavy rains. Plants, garden structures such as fences, and windbreaks may make the garden more attractive to pollinators.

Pesticides can harm bees and other pollinators directly or may change their behavior or reproductive potential. Some chemicals make pollinators more susceptible to disease. You can protect pollinators by using alternative prevention and control strategies such as hand-picking pests and mulching and by being selective when it becomes necessary to use pesticides.

Read and follow all label directions and pay particular attention to timing your application to minimize impact on pollinators. Generally, bees and others are less active in very early morning or at dusk. Choose spray rather than dust formulations of pesticides to lessen potential for contact. Avoid using pesticides in areas where pollinators are likely to forage. Maintain a buffer "no-spray area" when possible. Wait until flowers have faded (petal-fall) before applying. Mow the lawn to remove flowers of weeds before spraying.

Left: Bee collecting pollen on globe thistle flower
Right: Bees working on a poppy flower.
Photo Credits: Rosie Lerner, Purdue Extension

More Resources for Pollinator Habitats:

- St Joseph County SWCD Backyard Habitats www.stjosephswcd.org/wildlife-habitats
- USDA Forest Service: www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/pollinators/
- National Pollinator Partnership (and National Pollinator Week), www.pollinator.org

Apps for your smartphone:

- The *Bee Smart® Pollinator Gardener* is your comprehensive guide to selecting plants for pollinators specific to your area. Never get caught wondering what plants to buy again!
- *PictureThis* is capable of identifying 10,000+ plant species with accuracy of 98%, better than most human experts.

National Pollinator Week
June 17-23, 2019

Invasive Species Sold at Garden Centers You Should Never Buy

Wisteria sinensis (Chinese wisteria)

It was introduced from China to Europe and North America in 1816 and has secured a place as one of the most popular flowering vines for home gardens due to its flowering habit. It can displace native species. Sizable trees have been killed by vining wisteria. When these large trees are killed, it opens the forest floor to sunlight, which allows seedlings to grow and flourish.

Phyllostachys spp. (Bamboo)

Bamboo, which technically is a giant grass, is one of the world's most invasive plants. Once established, it is literally next to impossible to control. The sprouts that shoot up from the ground each spring can grow 12 inches a day! The underground roots of common running "fishpole" bamboo, which can easily reach 15 feet tall, can travel as far as 20 feet or more from the original clump. There's no denying bamboo makes a pretty exotic screen. And with its slender form, it is seemingly ideal for tight urban spaces. Yet, in no time new shoots will appear outside its planting space, creating a maintenance nightmare.

Hedera helix (English ivy)

English ivy is a vigorous growing vine that impacts all levels of disturbed and undisturbed forested areas, growing both as a ground cover and a climbing vine. As the ivy climbs in search of increased light, it engulfs and kills branches by blocking light from reaching the host tree's leaves. Branch dieback proceeds from the lower to upper branches, often leaving the tree with just a small green "broccoli head." The host tree eventually succumbs entirely from this insidious and steady weakening. In addition, the added weight of the vines makes infested trees much more susceptible to blow-over during high rain and wind events and heavy snowfalls.

Lonicera japonica (Japanese Honeysuckle vine)

In North America, Japanese honeysuckle has few natural enemies which allows it to spread widely and out-compete native plant species. Its evergreen to semi-evergreen nature gives it an added advantage over native species in many areas. Shrubs and young trees can be killed by girdling when vines twist tightly around stems and trunks, cutting off the flow of water through the plant. Dense growths of honeysuckle covering vegetation can gradually kill plants by blocking sunlight from reaching their leaves. Vigorous root competition also helps Japanese honeysuckle spread and displace neighboring native vegetation.

Euonymus alatus (Winged Burning Bush)

It threatens a variety of habitats including forests, coastal scrublands and prairies where it forms dense thickets, displacing many native woody and herbaceous plant species. Hundreds of seedlings are often found below the parent plant in what is termed a "seed shadow." There are two types available, the "old fashioned" or winged variety and the newer variety, Euonymus Alatus Compacta. The latter one is sold in nurseries and garden centers and does not spread and is not invasive. You can tell the difference between the two by looking at the stems. The older, invasive variety has "wings" on the stems, while the newer one does not. before buying these shrubs, check the stems to make sure of what you're buying.

Elaeagnus umbellata (Autumn olive)

It threatens native ecosystems by out-competing and displacing native plant species, creating dense shade and interfering with natural plant succession and nutrient cycling. It can produce up to 200,000 seeds each year, and can spread over a variety of habitats as its nitrogen-fixing root nodules allows the plant to grow in even the most unfavorable soils. Not to mention that it reproduces quickly and with little effort at all.

Pyrus calleryana (Callery/Bradford pear)

The Callery pear is native to China and Vietnam, and is an invasive species in many areas of eastern North America, outcompeting many native plants and trees. In the northeastern United States, wild Callery pears sometimes form extensive, nearly pure stands in old fields, along roadsides, and in similar disturbed areas. It was originally created to be sterile and so produces no fruit.

For more information on invasive species and Indiana Natives, visit out website:

www.stjosephswcd.org/backyard-conservation

St. Joseph County Soil & Water Conservation District

Visit us on Facebook

2903 GARY DRIVE
PLYMOUTH IN 46563

St. Joseph County Soil And Water Conservation Partnership

Education Volunteers Needed

Passionate about the environment? Interested in topics like pollinators, soil health, water quality, composting, and wildlife? St. Joseph County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) could use some new education volunteers. The SWCD Education Volunteers will help with a variety of programs and events that the district hosts. This includes things like in-school education programs, Science Alive, field trips, workshops, community programs, and more. If you are excited about conservation and want to share that with the community, you are the perfect fit! Contact Jane Sablich, Environmental Education Coordinator, today at jane.sablich@in.nacdnet.net or by calling (574) 936-2024 Ext. 4.

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!!!!

Scan me to go Green!