

MARION COUNTY  
SOIL AND WATER  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

# Conservation in the Neighborhood

VOL. 42, NO. 3



AUTUMN, 2021

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## Join Us for Our Stream Steward Workshop October 23rd

### Stream Steward Workshop Coming Soon— Register Today!

Don't miss our third Stream Steward Workshop happening at Spirit Lake in Broadripple on Saturday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> from 9:30-12 Noon! This workshop is being held in collaboration with Friends of the White River and is funded through generous grant support from the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust and its Partners for the White River initiative. Registration is required and attendees will learn about various facets of streambank management including invasive plant identification and treatment, sediment and erosion control strategies, stream ecosystems and other topics. A tree and shrub planting demonstration will conclude this unique event.

Spots are limited so register now at the following link:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/fall-2021-stream-steward-workshop-tickets-182897329837>

More recently, on Saturday September 25<sup>th</sup> our District Manager participated in the 2021 Downtown White River Cleanup in partnership with Friends of the White

River and Citizens Energy Group and sponsored by Xylem and Altar'd State. A total of 58 volunteers worked to collect an estimated 8 tons of trash at two downtown sites. At least 10 tires, a flatscreen TV and a toilet were also removed from the riverbanks! We look forward to partnering again on this annual tradition to improve the health of the White River.



*Big Thanks to the 58 volunteers who picked up 8 tons of trash!*

**SAVE THE DATE - 2/15/22**  
**MARION SWCD**  
**ANNUAL MEETING**

# Fall Lawn Care



**By Alena Jones, Urban Conservationist**

What are your lawn care plans for this fall? We have some recommendations to help keep your lawn looking great while also being kind to our ecosystem. Between September and November, green experts recommend:

- Overseed if your lawn is looking patchy or thin
- Fertilize if necessary to encourage strong root growth & better year-round health and color
- Aerate the soil
- Mower mulch fall leaves in place

As you begin your fall lawn care activities, be sure to test your soil to determine if fertilizer is necessary, and choose a low-phosphate or phosphate-free fertilizer to protect local rivers and streams. Fertilizer should always be applied as directed on the package.

Mulching your fall leaves instead of bagging and trashing them builds the soil and protects your lawn - if you have a mower, just mow the leaves two directions instead of raking. This is also beneficial for pollina-

tors and beneficial insects that need leaf litter over the winter to survive. If you're concerned about the amount of leaves on your lawn, composting the leaves for use the following year is also a great option! For faster decomposition of the compost, you can mulch the leaves prior to composting. Apply to garden beds instead of mulch in the spring. (See page 7 for more info)

Remember that it's fine to mow your lawn every few weeks instead of weekly, and that this practice actually helps increase the number of pollinators in our ecosystem because it creates a more favorable habitat. If you'd like more information about taking good care of your lawn while taking good care of the environment, or if you are curious about products, soil testing, and additional resources, please visit our website at <https://marionswcd.org/lawn-and-garden/>.



*Mulch your leaves rather than bagging to help build the soil*

Support  
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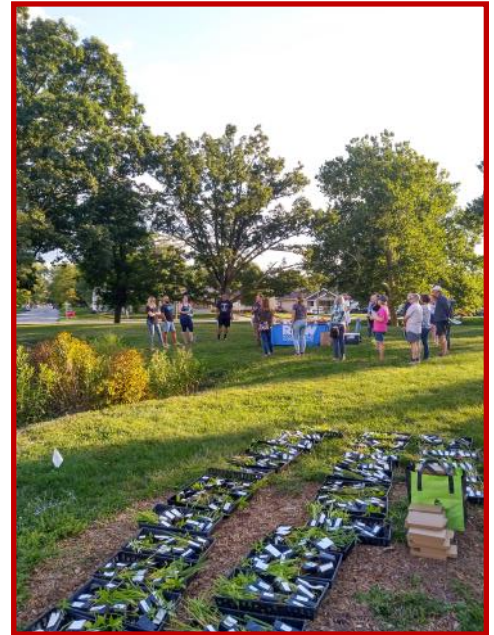
[Click Here to see details on our website.](#)



# Christian Park Rain Garden Workshop

## New Rain Garden Guide Coming Soon!

It was a glorious late summer evening for our rain garden workshop held with project partner Reconnecting to Our Waterways at Christian Park on the eastside of Indianapolis near the Pleasant Run waterway on September 9th. This was our second rain garden workshop held this year funded by our 2021 Clean Water Indiana grant from the Indiana State Department of Agriculture. The registration list was sold out for the event and 21 attendees learned how to design, build and maintain rain gardens while checking out the rain garden at Christian Park. Attendees took home a total of 320 plants provided by Native Plants Unlimited (<https://nativeplantsunlimitedshop.com/>) including Fox Sedge, Obedient Plant, Blue Flag Iris, Common Milkweed and Royal Catchfly, to start rain gardens at home. The weather was perfect and attendees also got a “sneak peak” of our *Rain Garden Guide* coming this fall, also funded by Clean Water Indiana.



*Attendees took home 320 plants provided by Native Plants Unlimited.*



Join us for our annual celebration of waterways  
**Friday, October 8, 3-5 p.m., Belmont Beach**

**Music, Food, Drink, Fun, Celebrate** - RSVP today: [bit.ly/ROWPort2021](https://bit.ly/ROWPort2021)

**ROWPORT 2021 IS  
 FREE BUT  
 REGISTRATION IS  
 REQUESTED.**

**PLEASE REGISTER  
 USING THE LINK  
 BELOW:**

**[ROWPORT2021](https://bit.ly/ROWPort2021)**

## Soil Health Focus

By Kevin Allison

I hope everyone's growing season is going well. I wanted to share a few cover crop to vegetable crop strategies that were especially useful at the SWCD demo garden this year. That fall update post can be found on our website at :

<https://marionswcd.org/eagle-creek-demo-garden-fall-2021/>

Here are a few additional resource links too. The John Kempf and Dr. Jones webinars dig into fascinating, cutting edge science about how plant roots interact with soil microbiology for nutrient acquisition. They also give great advice for regenerative agriculture and gardening. As you are making next year's crop plan, don't hesitate to contact me if you'd like to talk through managing for soil health.

- John Kempf—[Simple and Comprehensive Fertility Management for Market Gardens Presentation at the Soil and Nutrition Conference 2021](#)
- Dr. Christine Jones— [Secrets of the Soil Sociobiome](#) (and her other presentations!)
- Notillgrowers—Blogs, podcasts, and YouTube videos [HERE](#)

There is a wealth of information and content at [Notillgrowers.com](https://notillgrowers.com). I've been heavy into the compost topics found by searching for 'compost' on their website. The SWCD is excited to utilize funding from our USDA-NRCS soil health contribution agreement to bring notillgrower founder and Kentucky farmer Jesse Frost to the Indiana Small Farm Conference in March, 2022 to speak about soil health, compost, cover crops, and interplanting. Stay tuned!



For a more information on our Soil Health Program visit:

<https://marionswcd.org/soil-health-initiative/>



# Grass to Garden Signature Program

## *Start a Community-based Garden With Purdue Extension*

From improving access to fruits and vegetables to educating people on how food is grown, community gardens offer many benefits to the place you call home. Now Purdue Extension can help you get one started in your own neighborhood with its Grass to Garden Program! This program will help you strengthen agricultural and community development efforts, improve access to local, nutritious foods, create healthier communities, and more! This event will take place on October 27th, November 3rd, 10th, and 17th from 6:00 - 9:00 PM. Registration is \$50 per person by October 15th, 2021.

**Diversified Farming and Food Systems**



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Now, Purdue Extension can help you get one started in your own neighborhood with its Grass to Garden program!

**Who can join?**

- Non-profit employees
- Local officials
- Community volunteers
- Garden enthusiasts

**What will I learn?**

Every garden project is unique, and Grass to Garden will help you learn more than just how to grow plants — helping your program thrive by:

- Strengthening agricultural and community development efforts
- Improving access to local, nutritious foods
- Creating healthier communities, and more!

**Sign up today!**

Details for your Grass to Garden program – and how to register – are below:

<b>County Name:</b>	Area 5 Purdue Extension Team
<b>Dates:</b>	Oct. 27, Nov. 3, Nov. 10 & Nov. 17; 6-9 pm
<b>Location:</b>	Virtual Course
<b>Register at:</b>	Putnam Co. Extension Office 765-653-8411
<b>Registration Deadline:</b>	October 15, 2021
<b>Program Fee :</b>	\$50 per person

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Urban Agriculture


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## Prepping Construction Sites for Winter

By Alena Jones,  
Urban Conservationist

Winter typically brings muddy, messy conditions to even the most conscientious construction sites - unpredictable weather conditions and regular precipitation, along with frozen ground, can make it hard to manage sediment and prevent erosion. To ensure best outcomes, it's important to be proactive and prepared:

- **Ensure consistent and timely maintenance of measures that are difficult to replace once the ground freezes - such as silt fence, which must be trenched in - and consider replacing them with measures that are easier to maintain in cold weather, like fiber socks.**
- **Make sure that areas likely to be left undisturbed over the winter are seeded early enough in the fall that they can be temporarily stabilized with vegetation. If this is not possible, or if an area will be disturbed after the seeding window, make sure that you plan to use alternative measures for stabilization - mulch and erosion control blankets are great alternatives to vegetation. Stabilization is necessary even under winter conditions - so make sure you have a plan.**
- **Pay extra attention to maintaining construction entrances and regular sweeping of public and private roadways within or adjacent to construction sites. Winter can bring unavoidable mud. It's important to make sure that as much as possible stays on your job site, and what may manage to leave the site is promptly dealt with to avoid creating a mess if there's a sudden thaw.**
- **Maintain inlet protection regularly so that a sudden freeze or thaw doesn't result in issues with clogged drains creating puddling water and icy road conditions.**



Erosion Control maintenance is essential during the wet cold months.

For more information contact Alena Jones from our [Contact Us](#) page



# Black Gold for Gardeners

## Composting lawn waste yields big benefits

Fall begins the season for yard & garden clean up. Instead of bagging up those leaves and yard clippings consider starting a compost pile. Compost is extremely beneficial for flower beds and vegetable gardens as it supplies nutrients and greatly improves soil structure which is often poor in urban soils.

What do you need to get a compost pile started? Fresh green material (such as grass clippings), dry brown material (such as fallen leaves), some starter microbes (soil or starter compost), moisture, air and possibly some livestock manure or fertilizer to help heat it up if you have more brown material than green. You can also add kitchen scraps such as fruit & vegetable peelings, coffee grounds or egg shells, but no meat or oil. Ashes from your fireplace can also be added. Try to use an equal amount of browns to greens, turn or aerate the pile often to help it heat up, and add moisture if it starts to dry out before it's completely composted.

For more information see the link below:

## COMPOST

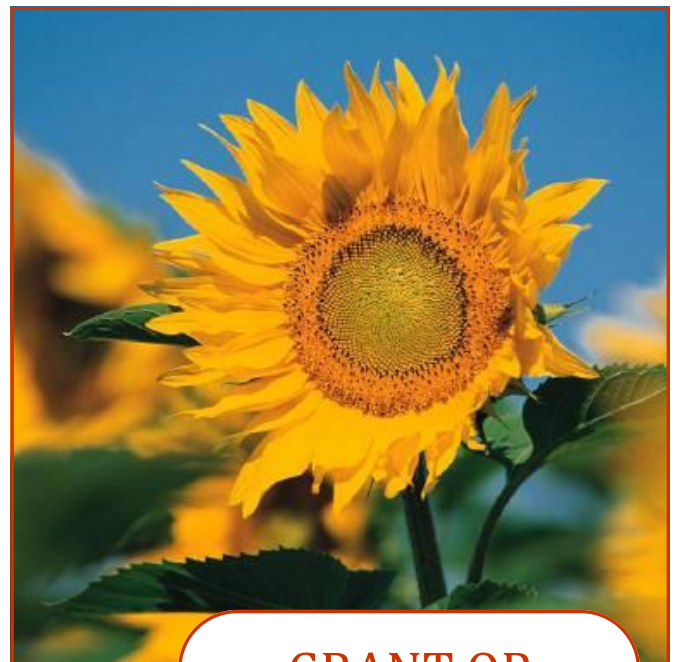


*Compost piles can be a good way to utilize your grass clippings and leaves—turning them into a rich amendment for your flower beds & gardens.*

## Remember to Keep Storm Drains Cleaned this Fall!



*It is the homeowners' responsibility to keep all storm drains cleaned off. Leaves accumulated over drain inlets can cause flooding of streets and yards.*



## GRANT OP

INPS has a small grant opportunity for conservation, study & use of native plants. [MORE INFORMATION](#)



MARION COUNTY  
**SOIL AND WATER**  
—CONSERVATION DISTRICT—

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**Phone: 317-786-1776**

**Find us on the web: [www.marionswcd.org](http://www.marionswcd.org)**

The Mission of the Marion County Soil & Water Conservation District is to assist Marion County land users in conserving soil, water, and related natural resources by providing technical, financial and educational services.

**\*\* PLEASE NOTE\*\***

**Due to the current COVID 19 crisis our office hours are limited and staff is often working remotely. Use the “[Contact Us](#)” tab on our website to leave a message & we will get back with you as soon as possible.**

## Invasive Highlight: Winged Burning Bush

An invasive species which is aggressively spreading throughout Indiana is Winged Burning Bush. This plant is a native of China, Japan and Korea and was brought here as an ornamental highly prized for its brilliant red foliage in the autumn when grown in full sun. Unfortunately, it is still a popular shrub sold in many nurseries across the United States.

Winged Burning Bush is a deciduous shrub which can grown up to 20 feet tall. Fruit appears in September and October and is spread by birds. There are two native species of euonymus which can be confused with invasive Winged Burning Bush. One is eastern burning bush or wahoo (*Euonymus atropurpureus*) which is a shrub or small tree with larger leaves and longer leaf stems than winged burning bush and has a more erect form. The other native is Running Euonymus or running strawberry bush which is a perennial groundcover found throughout most of Indiana. Its leaves are wider toward the tip and similar in size to wahoo. (Photos are available on the link below)

**Control:** Small burning bushes can be



*Winged Burning Bush is turning a brilliant red this time of year.*

pulled out or hand dug. These need to be disposed of properly as they can re-root from stems or roots. In areas of high infestation, prescribed burning can be efficient but must be done only by those trained and experienced in fire management. Large, seed-producing shrubs can be controlled by cutting, followed by stump herbicide treatment or basal bark treatment. Always follow label directions.

Controlling invasives involves repeated treatments and site monitoring. For more information click the link below:

### **BURNING BUSH**

Follow us on  
Facebook!



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