



MARION COUNTY
SOIL AND WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Conservation in the Neighborhood

VOL. 42, NO. 2

SPRING, 2021

SWCD BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Heather Buck,
Vice Chair
Maggie Goeglein,
Chairperson
Tyler Gough
Brian Neilson,
Secretary
Olivia Speckman,
Treasurer

ASSOCIATE SUPERVISORS

Paula Baldwin
Rick Bein
Marvin Brethauer
Robert Eddleman
Mark Kautz
Robert Kleinops
Beth Mason
Scott Minor
Mark Mongin
Dennis Slaughter
Henry Wallis
Blake Wilson

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Soil studies & survey 2
- Weed Wrangle 3
- Native Plant Sales 4
- Nature Challenge 5
- Brood X Cicadas 6
- Urban Ag Nomination 8

SWCD Welcomes 2 New Board Members

Our 2021 board of supervisors' election was held virtually in compliance with IN Open Door Law. Nominations from the floor were taken and virtual and hard copy ballots were accepted and tallied by the elections committee in a public meeting. Our district's board had two open positions with Blake Wilson and Scott Minor leaving big shoes to fill-thanks Blake and Scott for your many years of board service!

Two county residents were nominated from the

floor- Oliva Speckman and Tyler Gough. A total of 63 votes were received (60 virtual ballots, two mail in ballots and one ballot dropped in the ballot box provided at our office). In a nail biting finish, Olivia Speckman received 32 votes and Tyler Gough received 31 votes leaving Olivia to fill a 3 year board position (left vacant by Blake Wilson) and Tyler a 2 year board position (left vacant by Scott Minor).

Congratulations Olivia and Scott!



Olivia Speckman is a scientist at V3 Companies in downtown Indianapolis. Professionally, as a consultant for V3, Olivia works with developers, property owners, and regulatory agencies in order to maintain or improve water, stream, and wooded area quality in Indiana and throughout the Midwest.

Learn more about Olivia [HERE](#)



Tyler Gough oversees the planning and operation of all aspects of Indy Urban Acres, a project of the Parks Alliance of Indianapolis. IUA is a system of four organic farms on the east, west, and south sides of Indianapolis that grows and harvests fruits and vegetables to feed more than 50,000 individuals who are food insecure.

Learn more about Tyler [HERE](#)

Spring is here with all the problems that come with heavy rainfall. Check out [our website for drainage assistance.](#)

Indy channel CBS4 recently did a piece on [drainage problems](#) after interviewing District Manager John Hazlett.

Support Urban Conservation Become a SWCD Affiliate Member!

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

Butler's Study on Contaminants in an Urban System

An Environmental Chemistry class at Butler University is learning about soil contaminants in urban systems. Through the class, they have developed a survey for urban farmers and home gardeners to learn about perceptions and practices of soil contaminants. The survey should only take 10-20 minutes to complete and there is an option to enter to win a \$100 gift card raffle for Urban Farmer (a local seed and supply company). If doing so, **please complete the survey by Friday, April 23, 2021.** Urban Agriculture Perceptions and Practices of Soil Contaminants Survey link:



https://butler.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3sfp9UdU3huytO6

Purdue Extension Urban Agriculture Survey



Purdue Extension is conducting a survey to determine priority needs of urban growers. The Marion County SWCD regularly partners with Purdue Extension and recognizes the importance of grower input in the direction of agency programs, workshops, and assistance. The SWCD encourages local growers to participate.

A note from Purdue Extension:
"First, we would like to thank you for all that you do in your communities whether it be teaching people to grow, providing healthy foods or a space for people to get their hands in the dirt, educating youth and more than we can list. We have recognized that Purdue Extension and our community partners have a long way to go to provide relevant and accessible materials and programs to support your diverse endeavors.

We are asking you to take no more than 15 minutes to complete a survey to help Extension and our community partners better serve Indiana urban farmers and gardeners. Feel free to contact us directly with any questions, concerns or suggestions. And please, share with your fellow farmers! Your responses will remain anonymous." [Link to survey HERE](#)

Questions? Contact:
Nathan Shoaf, nlshoaf@purdue.edu (765) 496-3225, Urban Agriculture Coordinator for Purdue Extension or
Dr. Laura Ingwell, lingwell@purdue.edu, (765) 494-6167, Assistant Professor in the Department of Entomology

Thank you for taking a few minutes to complete their survey!

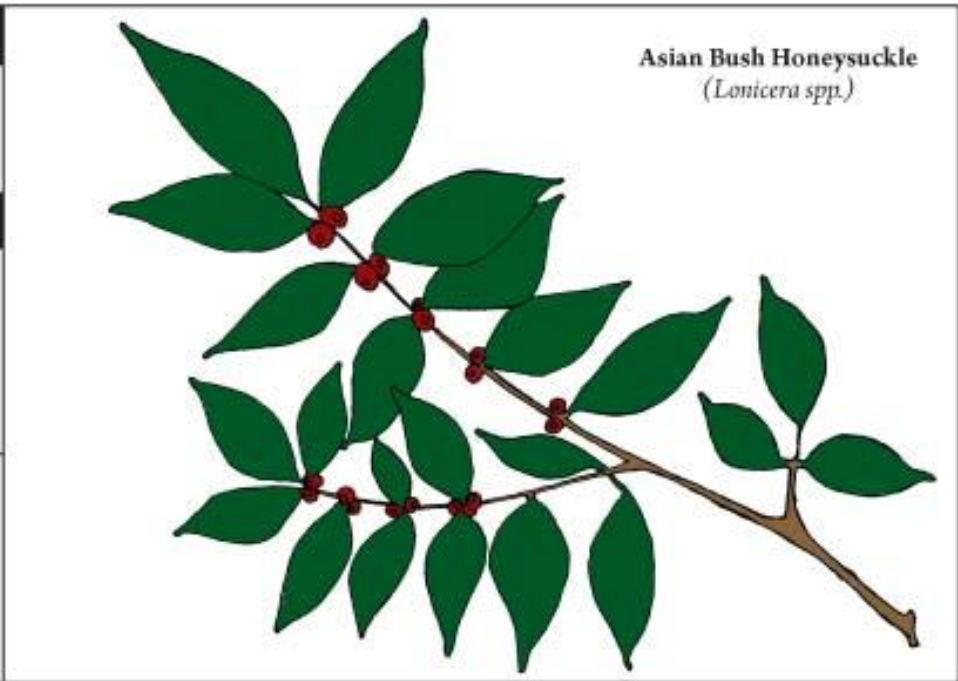
WANTED

FOR INVADING OUR WATERWAYS, GARDENS, AND PARKS ALL OVER INDIANAPOLIS.
FOR STRANGLING OUT IMPORTANT NATIVE SPECIES, NOT CONTRIBUTING TO THE
SURROUNDING ECOSYSTEM, AND BREAKING CHAINSAWS (AND BACKS).

'HONEYSUCKLE AND THE GANG'

SIGN UP FOR THE "INDY WEED WRANGLE" AND HELP REMOVE THESE SCOUNDRELS

DATE / TIME:
MAY 8TH, 2021 9a-12p
LOCATIONS:
Graham Edward Martin Park 1500 Fall Creek PKWY E Dr. Indianapolis, IN 46202 Sign up: KIBI.ORG/PROJECTS
Eagle Creek Park 6040 Delong Rd. Indianapolis, IN 46254 SIGN UP ON FACEBOOK: @IndyLandStewardship



ALL TOOLS, WATER, AND SNACKS AT THIS INVASIVE REMOVAL WILL BE PROVIDED.



Brought to you by Circle City Cisma:



Other Marion County Cisma Members:
 Amos Butler Audubon Society
 Central Indiana Land Trust
 Indiana DNR
 Indianapolis Garden Club
 Hoosier Chapter Sierra Club
 Master Gardeners



Learn how planting native plants can make a big difference in the urban environment -

[Visit our website](#)



For a more comprehensive list of native plant vendors, visit:

<https://indiananative-plants.org/landscaping/where-to-buy/>

Spring Native Plant Sales

Spring is the perfect time to incorporate native plants into your backyard conservation efforts and native plugs are becoming more commercially available to homeowners. Check out these upcoming local sales:

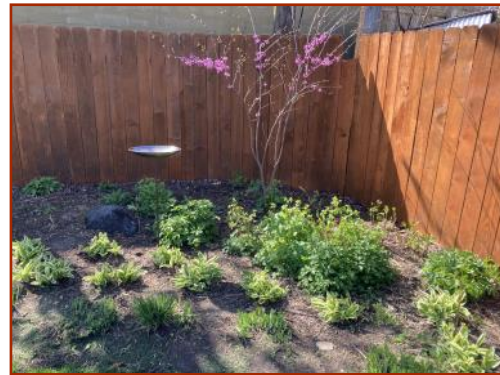
Indy Urban Acres <https://www.iuaplantsale.com/>

Native Plants Unlimited
<https://nativeplantsunlimitedshop.com/>

Keep Indianapolis Beautiful Inc:

<https://www.kibi.org/native-plant-nursery>

To find out more about native plants and why they are beneficial visit the Indiana Native Plant Society's website: <https://indiananativeplants.org/>



Missed Our SWCD Annual Meeting? Watch It Online!

Our 51st annual meeting (our first held virtually) was a hit with over 150 virtual attendees! After a short presentation by all staff members on our various district programs and a financial and elections committee report, we were treated to an amazing presentation by renowned native plant expert and author Doug Tallamy. A Q&A and door prize drawing of two of Professor Tallamy's books were given away.

Go to www.homegrownnationalpark.org to become part of a nationwide movement to restore biodiversity and ecosystem function by planting native plants.



Weren't able to attend our 2021 annual meeting? Go to the link below to watch the full program:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xkOycyYJNog&t=1030s>

Join the Indy City Nature Challenge

The City Nature Challenge is an effort for cities to find and document as much urban nature as possible by challenging residents to become citizen scientists: Residents are asked to explore their area (backyard, playgrounds, parks, etc.) for plants and bugs/animals, document their findings (take a photo), and report them (via the iNaturalist website or app). The underlying objective of this event is to develop a new baseline of a city's biodiversity and to monitor how exactly change is accelerating.

The City Nature Challenge will be April 30th and May 3rd, 2021 and will be undertaken in hundreds of cities across the world this year, and Indianapolis will be one of those cities competing in this international event! There are learning opportunities created by ROW's collective members in their *In the Know with ROW* series which will help you prepare for the Nature Challenge. They invite you to register, participate and share the information with your own friends, neighbors and networks.

Check out the link below for the next **In the Know with ROW!**

[Do Citizen Science: Identify Backyard Plants, Animals and Insects](#), April 27, 6-7:15 p.m.

They have also created a landing page on ROW's website where you can later [watch the *In the Know with ROW*](#) segment if you missed it (including the March 31 segment on the Benefits of Bats and the April 20th segment on addressing litter & illegal dumping), or you can locate other resources provided. A special thanks to the Nina Mason Pulliam Charitable Trust for their support of these events.

The collective is made stronger by those who come together and find ways to improve quality of life along our waterways, and this virtual *In the Know with ROW* series has been a positive way to gather and advance their goals and work plans together.



Mow Less to Help Pollinators

By Alena Jones, Urban Conservationist

Did you know that mowing your lawn less frequently is one of the fastest and easiest ways for homeowners to protect pollinators? Many conservation organizations encourage waiting as long as possible into the spring to clean up winter debris (critical pollinator habitat) and begin a mowing rotation. Some areas have adopted No-Mow May - encouraging citizens to refrain from mowing their lawns until the end of May, to ensure that pollinators have ample food supply as they are emerging from winter hibernation. According to a recent article in the journal of Biological Conservation, mowing your lawn every few weeks instead of weekly is all that's required to provide important floral resources for bees and increase the presence of these crucial pollinators. A citizen science project conducted by UK organization Plantlife concluded lawns participating in reduced mowing could support the browsing of between 400 and 4000 bees a day.

Many of us want to help pollinators but feel overwhelmed by the idea of transitioning away from our lawns. This easy solution - waiting to mow (until at least June 1), mowing less frequently (once every two to four weeks), and mowing your lawn at a taller height (3-4 inches) can be an immediate and accessible way to help pollinators. As the journal of Biological Conservation puts it: "Mowing less frequently is practical, economical, and a timesaving alternative to lawn replacement or even planting pollinator gardens." Find out more about caring for your lawn and garden on our [website](#).



United States Department of Agriculture

Forestry Technical Note Periodical Cicadas - Brood X

This factsheet is adapted from a Pest Alert issued in May 2017 by the USDA Forest Service, NE Area State and Private Forestry. Publication number NA-PR-02-99.

Cicadas Information for Indiana NRCS Clients

Periodical Cicadas

Periodical cicadas are grouped into broods based on the year of adult emergence. Most broods appear every 17 years, others appear every 13 years, and some overlap in the same year. Since each brood appears during a different year, adults emerge somewhere almost every year. Periodical cicadas are sometimes called 17-year locusts. However, "locust" is a misnomer because true locusts are grasshoppers, not cicadas.

Brood X

Brood X will emerge in 15 states and Washington D.C. in 2021, including most of Indiana. Numbers of cicadas will be highest along the Ohio River and in south central Indiana up to Martinsville. Northern Indiana will experience scattered emergence.

Brood X periodical cicadas last emerged in spring 2004 over large portions of Indiana. This brood is the largest that occurs in the state. Brood X consists of three separate species of periodical cicadas: *Magicicada septendecim* (L.), *M. cassini* (Fisher), and *M. septendecula* (Alexander and Moore).

Ecological Benefits

- Periodical cicadas are a native species and emergence is timed to evade and overwhelm predators.
- The cicadas provide increased food resources underground the year before a hatch and the year of emergence for many other wildlife species.
- Cicadas will be eaten by fish, turkeys, squirrels, birds, reptiles, amphibians, insects and arachnids.
- The trees in our forests and young seedlings have survived many generations with cicadas and healthy trees can easily survive the damage from egg laying and the nymphs feeding on the roots for 17 years.
- Although the immense number of cicadas can be a bit overwhelming, they are not hazardous to people or pets and they do not bite or sting.

Appearance and Life Cycle

Adult periodical cicadas usually have red eyes (occasionally white, or rarely blue or marbled white and orange). Their dark bodies measure just over 1½ inches long. They are not capable of biting or stinging. Periodical cicadas should not be confused with annual (dog day) cicadas, which are larger, usually green with black eyes, and appear every summer in much smaller numbers.

Adults live for about 4 to 6 weeks during which their sole purpose is to mate and lay eggs. Males are responsible for the familiar droning, which is how they call for mates. Cicada "songs" are heard from early morning to late evening as long as adults are present.



An adult periodical cicada rests on a utility pole during the Brood V emergence in West Virginia, 2016. (USFS photo by Sandra Clark)



The female may make a continuous slit up to 3 inches long while laying eggs. (USFS photo by Karen Felton)



A female lays 24 to 28 eggs in slits she makes in a twig. (USFS photo by Rick Turcotte)



After feeding underground for 17 years, nymphs crawl out, shed their skins and emerge as adults. (USFS photo by Heather Smith)

The branch damage, or "flagging," associated with periodical cicadas results from females laying eggs in small twigs. A female cuts two parallel slits in a twig where she lays 24 to 28 eggs. Each female can lay over 600 eggs on multiple branches. Sometimes a continuous slit 2 to 3 inches long is formed as she slowly makes her way up a twig. The slits can cause breakage, or flagging, of the tips of the branches.

The eggs hatch in 6 weeks, and young cicadas, or nymphs, fall to the ground where they burrow into the soil and spend the next 17 years feeding on small roots, without causing significant damage. At the end of this time, usually in May and early June, nymphs crawl out of the soil and climb up tree trunks or other vertical objects where they shed their skins and emerge as adults.

Host Plants

Many deciduous trees (such as oak, apple, hickory, and dogwood) are preferred hosts; however, other woody plants (such as grapevines, junipers, and alders) have also been damaged during emergence of periodical cicadas.



Flagging damage in hemlock and American hornbeam.
(Courtesy photo by William Oldland)



Flagging damage in oaks. (Courtesy photo by Chris Lawrence)

Managing and Reducing Damage

Knowing where and when periodical cicadas will emerge helps in reducing and managing the damage they may cause. The Forest Service has mapped the county location and year of emergence for 15 broods of active periodical cicadas in the United States.

To manage damage on hardwood tree plantings:

- Avoid planting during the year of Brood X emergence, if possible and economical; however, damage in new plantations may be no worse than deer browse.
- If you plant bare root seedlings, establish them as early in the spring as site conditions allow so they can establish a good root system before cicada emergence.
- Although delaying planting until late June is sometimes recommended, the risk of tree mortality from drought is not worth the risk. It is better to establish seedling early and have some cicada damage than complete mortality from drought.
- Female cicadas prefer twigs about the size of a pencil (3/16 to 7/16 inch in diameter). If damage to a newly planted seedling occurs it should sprout back from the root collar.

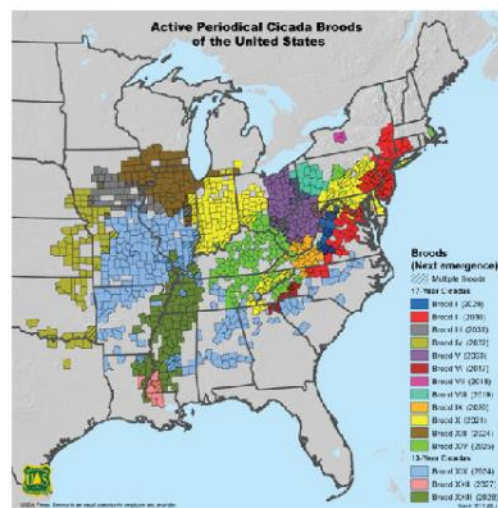
- Cicada damage to tree plantings less than five years old may result in multiple leaders. Prune seedling for one dominant leader within two years of the cicada damage.
- If planting more expensive grafted seedlings, tree tubes with netting over the top may help protect your investment in grafted seedlings.

To manage damage on ornamental and yard trees:

- Healthy trees can withstand the egg laying damage caused by cicadas. The flagging that results from egg laying damage will fall off over time or can be pruned away.
- Prune ornamentals and trees lightly or not at all the winter before periodical cicadas emerge. Damaged twigs may be pruned the following winter.
- In heavily infested areas, if possible and economical, delay new plantings of woody ornamentals and trees until fall or spring after emergence to avoid damage.
- Protect small shade and ornamental trees by covering them with cheesecloth, finely woven netting or tobacco shade cloth with mesh less than 1/2 inch. This covering physically prevents females from laying eggs in the twigs.
- Insecticide treatments for cicadas are often not effective and difficult to apply. If you are considering insecticide treatments refer to Purdue's Landscape and Ornamental publication E-47-W at <https://extension.entm.purdue.edu/publications/E-47.pdf>.

Complicating Factors

- A very wet spring that delays planting can result in more mortality from cicadas if tree roots are not well established.
- Spring or summer drought can amplify the impact of cicada damage.
- Large seedlings like black walnut, oaks, hickory and yellow poplar may experience more cicada damage.
- Young plantings next to mature woods may see more damage from cicadas moving out from the woods to the young trees.



(Forest Service map by A. M. Liebhold, M. J. Bohne, R. L. Lilja)





MARION COUNTY
SOIL AND WATER
—CONSERVATION DISTRICT—

1200 S. Madison Ave., Suite 200
 Indianapolis, IN 46225

Phone: 317-786-1776

Find us on the web: 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 is temporarily closed and staff is working remotely. Use the “[Contact Us](#)” tab on our website to leave a message & we will get back with you as soon as possible.

Sharrona Moore Nominated for Advisory Committee on Urban Agriculture

The SWCD has nominated Mrs. Sharrona Moore of Indianapolis to serve on the USDA’s Advisory Committee on Urban Agriculture. Sharrona is an urban agricultural producer and founder of Lawrence Community Gardens, a 7.6 acre urban youth vegetable farm that uses a cooperative business model to empower young people with knowledge and skills to grow food and build a sustainable community. Her mission is to serve her neighborhood with affordable access to organic produce and provide donations to pantries for those who are insecure.

Sharrona has implemented voluntary conservation on her urban farm through the NRCS Environmental Quality Incentives Program including the establishment of hedgerows for pollinating insects and the construction of a high tunnel. This practical experience gives her critical insight into the process and potential for USDA programs in the urban environment. She has also worked closely with the Marion County Soil and Water Conservation District and Purdue Extension to carry out demonstrations,



vermiculture research, research of volunteerism and retention, workshops, and networking opportunities. Her understanding of agency resources is valuable, but even more important is her input on how these agencies can improve in terms of process, policies, outreach, and inclusiveness.

Representatives from several state and local organizations also added their names to the application in support of Sharrona. We are looking forward to the USDA’s decision on our nomination and are proud of her leadership in building community around urban farming.

Follow us on Facebook!



SWCD Staff

John Hazlett,
District Manager

Kevin Allison,
Urban Soil Health
Specialist

Alena Jones, Urban
Conservationist

Julie Farr,
Resource
Conservationist, PT

Jerod Chew,
NRCS District
Conservationist

