



## HortusScope | What's Up in the Central Indiana

Gardening Community | [Image courtesy TechRepublic](#)

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**Now Through Sunday, May 12 Spring Blooms at Newfields** Come early and often to experience the fusion of art and nature at Newfields. This year's floral extravaganza peaks in early April with more than 40,000 new blooming bulbs throughout The Garden, along with flowering trees and shrubs in the Rapp Family Ravine Garden and Gene & Rosemary Tanner Orchard and thousands of award-winning orchids in the Madeline F. Elder Greenhouse. Refuel at the Beer Garden at Garden Terrace with a chef-designed menu and best-in-style beers from Germany, Belgium, and your local Indy favorites. Beds of hyacinths and daffodils will give way to tulips and magnificent lupines. Meanwhile, spring ephemerals will linger in The Virginia B. Fairbanks Art & Nature Park all spring season as the Wild Birds Unlimited Native Pollinator Meadow wakes up. Check out the related classes Newfields is offering on creating orchid bowls and mounted orchids. <https://discovernewfields.org/springblooms>

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**Tuesday, April 2 Indiana Daylily-Iris Society The Present & Future of Novelty Iris** Presentation by David Toth of Indian Creek Iris, Pickrell, Nebraska. David became interested in iris in 1983 after attending an iris show in southern California. Eventually returning to the family farm in SE Nebraska, he began serious iris hybridizing and decided to focus only on the Novelty class. After spending many years building genetic lines, he introduced his first iris in 2017. Since then, he has introduced about 150 new iris varieties. Novelty iris can include things like variegated foliage, purple stems, flat forms, broken colors, extra petals, horns/spoons/flounces at the end of the beard, etc. Join us as he shares the current variations available and future directions in the Novelty class. 6:30 p.m., First Friends Church, 3030 Kessler Blvd, East Drive, Indianapolis.

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**Thursday, April 4 Bird ID Hike at Virginia B. Fairbanks Art & Nature Park** Journey through the Park with Wild Birds Unlimited's Naturalist Brian Cunningham. You'll find all sorts of feathered friends, including white-breasted nuthatches, downy woodpeckers, goldfinches, and more on this 1.5-mile guided hike. Free. 9:00 to 11:00 a.m., Fairbanks Art & Nature Park, west of Newfields. Register at <https://discovernewfields.org/calendar/bird-id-hike-wild-birds-unlimited>.

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**Saturday, April 6 Gardening Class with The Hoosier Gardener** Jo Ellen Meyers Sharp, a self-confessed hortiholic and prolific writer, will lead an interactive session for beginning and master gardeners alike. Following a long run as garden columnist for the Indianapolis Star, she has published stories in such national and local publications as The American Gardener, Indiana Gardening, Angie's List magazine, and Edible Indy. This is a chance to ask Indy's own gardening guru for advice on your own garden challenges. Check out her website at <https://hoosiergardener.com>. Ticket (\$30) includes the class and two plants to

take home. Noon to 1:30 p.m., The Rejoicing Vine, 8440 W 82nd St, Indianapolis. Purchase tickets at <https://www.rejoicingvine.com/event-details-registration/gardening-class>.

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**Saturday, April 6 Garlic Mustard Pull at Virginia B. Fairbanks Art & Nature Park** Join Indiana Native Plant Society members in identifying and pulling invasive garlic mustard before it goes to seed. Free. 10:00 a.m. to noon, Fairbanks Art & Nature Park, west of Newfields. Register at <https://discovernewfields.org/calendar/garlic-mustard-pull-inps>.

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**Saturday, April 6 Boone County Master Gardeners' Gardenfest (Lebanon)** More than 22 garden-related vendors will sell unique garden art, gifts, flowers, herbs, shrubs, succulents, native plant seeds and other garden items. Highlights of the day include a used tool and garden item sale, free soil testing, and expert speakers: Jared Spokowsky, "Pollinator Plants"; Karen Smith and Jennifer Davies, "The Laws of Attraction – Birds, Butterflies and Bees"; and Rachel Walker, "So you Bought an Orchid, Now What? Basic Orchid Keeping in the Home". Children's activities, free Q & A, lunch with homemade desserts will also be available. Free native tree seedlings will be given to the first 300 participants. Free and open to the public. 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Farm Bureau Community Building, Boone Co. 4-H Fairgrounds, 1300 E 100 S, Lebanon. Find more info at [www.mastergardenersboonecounty.org](http://www.mastergardenersboonecounty.org) or <https://www.facebook.com/Master-Gardeners-of-Boone-County-Indiana-596354453716188/>

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**Monday, April 8 Eclipse Viewing Party at Holliday Park** If you haven't yet made plans to view the once-in-a-lifetime phenomenon of a total eclipse of the sun, come witness this spectacle with fellow nature-lovers while enjoying food, music and learning about wildlife! Hosted by Indiana Wildlife Federation, the day-long festivities will include an invasive plant weed-wrangle, displays by local environmental groups, food by Cluster Truck, and live music by Brad Cates. 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Holliday Park, 6363 Spring Mill Road, Indianapolis. Details and tickets at <https://indianawildlife.org/event/total-solar-eclipse-viewing-party-at-holliday-park/>.

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**Saturday, April 13 thru May 31 Indiana Native Plant Society Florathon 2024** How many native wildflower species will you find in bloom? Form your teams now, give yourselves a name, solicit sponsors, and prepare to venture out into Indiana's lovely natural areas to spot flowers in bloom. The Florathon is a great way to enjoy spring wildflowers and support a worthy cause. <https://indiananativeplants.org/inps-sponsored-events/florathon/>

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**Saturday, April 13 Monroe County Master Gardeners Association Garden Fair (Bloomington)** This free Garden Fair features 35 commercial exhibitors and nonprofit agencies related to horticulture and gardening. Patrons can purchase houseplant starts from Master Gardeners and learn about topics from invasive plants to urban greenspaces. Enjoy lunch at the Garden Thyme Cafe and bring the family to make a wildflower seedpod at the Family Activity booth. Arrive early to be one of the first 400 attendees and have a chance to get a free [buttonbush](#) seedling! 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Switchyard Park Pavilion, 1601 S Rogers Street, Bloomington. <https://www.mcmga.net/garden-fair>

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**Monday, April 15 Indianapolis Hosta Society (Carmel) Where Are All the Butterflies?** Retired entomologist John Thieme shares what has happened to our butterfly populations over the years and what positive actions we can take to help them. John's knowledge and appreciation for these beloved creatures spans more than fifty years. Come learn about these beloved and beautiful insects. Free and open to the public. 6:30 p.m., Coxhall Mansion, 11677 Towne Rd, Carmel.

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**Wednesday, April 17 Indiana Phenology Spring Observer Training** A 90-minute in-depth virtual training session for those who want to become Indiana Phenology Backyard Observers. 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Tickets \$5 at <https://secure.givelively.org/event/indiana-phenology-co/observer-training>

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**Thursday, April 18 Indiana Native Plant Society Central Chapter Getting Reliably Safe Plants for Pollinators** Wondering whether the plants you buy are safe for pollinators from the start? Sharon Selvaggio, Pesticide Program Specialist at The Xerces Society, shares why choosing pollinator-safe nurseries is important and how plant buyers can evaluate nursery practices. She will also introduce Xerces' model for obtaining pollinator-safe native plants in quantity. Tiny, inconspicuous, unappreciated species hold our world together. On their behalf, Sharon works to help people recognize the risks of pesticides and move away from pesticide reliance toward more prevention-based pest management. A former biologist and refuge manager with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Sharon worked for several years with Northwest Center for Alternatives to Pesticides. This virtual program is open to everyone. Online event begins at 7:00 p.m. Please register at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/plants-for-pollinators-getting-reliably-safe-plants-tickets-834823578797>

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**Saturday, April 20 Herb Society of Central Indiana Spring Symposium (Noblesville) Yarrow: It's the Bees Knees** The herb of the year, Yarrow, will be honored with a presentation by Audrey Barron, herbalist with her own herb farm. Yarrow is her favorite herb, and she will share its many uses and benefits. The symposium features knowledgeable speakers, silent auction, live plants, snacks and lunch, crafts, vendors, and books. Cost \$75. 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Hamilton County Fair Grounds, 2003 Pleasant St, Noblesville. Register **by April 6** at <https://sites.google.com/view/herb-society-of-central-indian/symposium-2024?authuser=0>

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**Saturday–Sunday, April 20–21 Garfield Park Conservatory 2024 Orchid Show** On this weekend, the Garfield Conservatory will be filled with displays of blooming orchids from across the Midwest. Come check out this annual event presented by the Central Indiana Orchid Society. Orchids will also be available for sale. Admission \$6 per person or \$14 per family. Hours 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. both days. 2505 Conservatory Dr, Indianapolis. <https://www.garfieldgardensconservatory.org/programmevents>

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**Saturday, April 27 The Dirty Dozen: Are These Invasive Plants in Your Yard?** Learn all about invasive plants, including what makes them so invasive, where they come from, how they spread, and the damage they cause to our environment, health, and economy. You'll learn how to identify the 12 most common invasive plants in Hamilton County and what you can do to prevent their spread. Presented via a partnership between Hamilton County Invasives Partnership and the Carmel Clay Public Library. Registration recommended, opens March 9 at <https://carmelclaylibrary.org/event/10154271>.

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**Friday & Saturday, May 3 & 4 Hancock County Herb Society & Master Gardener Association Plant Sale (Greenfield)** Get expert advice and select from a large array of plant choices. The Herb Society offers a variety of culinary, medicinal, decorative, and craft-use herbs, along with tomato and pepper plants and potted perennials. Master Gardener choices include an extensive variety of perennials, vegetable plants, geraniums, begonias, house plants, and hanging baskets, just in time for Mother's Day. HCMGA pre-sale orders may be placed online April 23-30 at [hancockmga.com](http://hancockmga.com) and picked up during the plant sale. Credit and debit cards accepted. 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. Friday and 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Saturday. Hancock County Fairgrounds, 4-H Show Arena (southwest corner of Apple and Park Streets). For more information, contact Carolyn (HCHS) at 317-326-2274 or Teresa (HCMGA) at 317-441-9944.

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**Saturday, May 4 Johnson Garden Club Celebration XIX (Franklin) May the 4th Be with You: The Ultimate Experience in Gardening** Learn how to cultivate and grow annuals, perennials, shrubs, grasses, and trees that enhance your landscaping. Come browse more than 70 vendor displays, ask the expert speakers your gardening questions, visit the Garden Café, and pick up free seeds and tree seedlings while supplies last. Admission is \$2, cash only. 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Johnson County Fairgrounds, 250 Fairground St, Franklin. Event questions answered at [jcgardenclub@gmail.com](mailto:jcgardenclub@gmail.com). See social media for vendors and speakers.

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**Sunday–Saturday, May 5–11 Indiana Native Plant Society Auction** This virtual auction offers rare native plants, private garden tours, celebrity guided hikes, and choice natives from INPS’s invasive-free Grow Indiana Natives [vendors and designers](#). Details at <https://indiananativeplants.org/native-plant-auction/>

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**Monday, May 13 Indianapolis Hosta Society (Carmel) Take Better Photos with Your iPhone** The creative mind of the photographer is still the most important element in a great photo. The camera doesn’t create a photograph any more than a hammer designs a building; it’s merely a tool that allows us to create our vision. Speaker Rad Drew will show you how to photograph what moves and excites you, recommending apps to use and sharing iPhone native camera fundamentals. He will also explain how to use SnapSeed workflow to improve any image. Free and open to the public. 6:30 p.m., Coxhall Mansion, 11677 Towne Rd, Carmel.

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**Saturday, May 18 Hamilton County Master Gardeners Association (Noblesville) 25th Annual Plant & Iris Sale** The sale will feature a wide selection of plants, including native plants, hostas, daylilies, perennials, vegetables, water plants and some shrubs and small trees. Dug-to-order irises will be available for purchase at the Iris Bed on the southwest corner of the fairgrounds. There are never enough wagons for everyone so bring your own if you can! Cash, check, or credit card accepted. In addition, free gardening information and expert planting advice will be offered. Please, no dogs allowed. Proceeds from this fundraiser go toward HCMGA’s [Barney Hobbs Memorial Horticulture Scholarship Fund](#), awarded annually to qualifying college students majoring in horticulture, botany, landscape architecture/design or an agriculture or environmental science that includes a plant-focused component. 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., Hamilton County 4-H Fairgrounds, 2003 Pleasant St, Noblesville. For more information about the plant and iris sale, visit [hcmga.org](http://hcmga.org).

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**Saturday, June 8 Indianapolis Hosta Society Private Gardens Open to the Public** Seven IHS members and friends are sharing their gardens for touring. Each garden will feature a different vendor selling either plants or garden art, and docents will be available to answer questions. Gardens open 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tickets are \$25 and required for entrance. Purchase tickets at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/indianapolis-hosta-society-2024-garden-tour-tickets-812539265817?aff=erelpanelorg>.

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**For Pollinators’ Sake Don’t Spring into Garden Cleanup Too Soon!** With spring arriving, it’s tempting to begin working on our yards and gardens. But the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation tells us that clearing debris and trimming plants too soon can actually harm bees, butterflies, and other important pollinators. Those bees you see buzzing on early blooms still need cover during chilly nights and heavy spring showers. Other species will wait to emerge until much warmer days, well into May. Learn more at this [blog](#).

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**Water Wise Rain Barrels from Hamilton County SWCD** With spring rains on the way, it's time to order your rain barrels (\$85) from the soil and water conservation district. These re-purposed barrels capture rainwater from your downspout and roof and hold it for later use such as watering plants or even washing the car. Pre-order **by May 16** and pick up May 22 in Noblesville. Proceeds support conservation projects and education in Hamilton County. <http://www.hamiltonswcd.org> NOTE: Carmel residents are eligible for a \$50-\$75 rebate from the City Stormwater Program after installing a rain barrel.

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**Bill Watch 2024 Update Hoosier Environmental Council** A positive outcome from this legislative session: passage of a bipartisan bill, SEA 246, which offers lower taxes to owners whose properties are designated wetlands. Property owners who preserve wetlands on their property do a service for the broader community since their wetland helps store stormwater, which reduces flooding and helps the stormwater soak in and replenish groundwater supplies. SEA 246 was signed by Governor Eric Holcomb and has become law! [www.hecweb.org](http://www.hecweb.org)

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**Worthy Cause Indiana Phenology** We've gathered nearly a quarter of a million phenology observations over the past five years as part of our mission to deepen our understanding of Indiana's natural world. We need your support to upgrade our data analysis capabilities with a subscription for GIS software to support data analysis and visualization and the day-to-day business needs of a small volunteer-run nonprofit. Your gift of any size is welcome at <https://www.indianaphenology.org/donate>. See also April 17 training event.

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**Advocacy Opp Save the Tree Canopy** A new grass roots group has formed, inviting all to make the general public, civic leaders, and developers aware of the urgent need to protect mature green-growth areas and to educate them regarding the benefits of extensive wooded areas. A tree canopy exists when the upper portions of mature trees come together to form a layer sheltering the ground. The group's aim is to preserve, maintain, and protect existing and established green spaces to store as much carbon dioxide as possible. They will support volunteers to attend local government meetings, petition, and write letters when proposals call for the destruction of existing mature trees. Learn more and get involved at <https://www.savethetreecanopy.org>.

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**Employment Opp Hoosier Environmental Council** HEC is seeking a part-time *Mounds Greenway Coordinator*. Job description and application: <https://www.hecweb.org/about/careers/>.

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**Photo Notes** A total solar eclipse supposedly comes our way only once in 800 years! It feels like some kind of sign that we must be in for a complete change. Like maybe when the sun creeps back out from behind the moon, we're going to emerge happy and raring to conquer climate change, eliminate hunger, ban single-use plastics, elect great leaders, get our kids into nature, save Indiana's wetlands, rescue our insect population, etc. etc. While we're all looking up (with protective glasses, of course), maybe we can consider how together we can keep things looking up. Where will you be during the eclipse on April 8? I'll be out in the garden keeping company with the confused wildlife. The DNR can tell you everything you need to enjoy the show [here](#).

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**HortusScope**, an e-bulletin for the Central Indiana gardening community, is published the first of every month as a public service by Wendy Ford. To submit news items, add or update your e-mail address, or remove your name from the HortusScope e-mail list, please drop me a note at [hortusscope@comcast.net](mailto:hortusscope@comcast.net). Your supporting donation cheerfully accepted at 6911 Cabernet Way, Indianapolis, IN 46278, check made out to Wendy Ford.

Thank you Tippecanoe County Master Gardeners for your generous support of HortusScope.

## Volunteer Opportunities

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**Preserve Nature Preserves Work Days with Central Indiana Land Trust** Want to help keep our nature preserves healthy and resilient? Join CILTI stewardship staff for a volunteer day at a nature preserve to tackle invasives, remove debris, and otherwise support the health of a beautiful natural area. Multiple opportunities are listed at <https://conservingindiana.org/events/category/volunteer-event/>.

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**Pollinator Partnership Collect Native Seed for Project Wingspan** Project Wingspan is an initiative supported by a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Federation. It is administered by the non-profit Pollinator Partnership, which is leading a coalition of partners to enhance land across the Midwest to support our imperiled pollinators – especially monarch butterflies and the rusty patch bumblebee. You can help us make a difference! Native seed that is collected will be shipped to the main nursery with Pollinator Partnership where it will be processed (cleaned and sorted) and distributed to predetermined conservation areas to help these pollinators survive. Volunteers under 16 years old must be accompanied by a parent/guardian. Interested volunteers can sign up here: <https://www.carmelclayparks.com/park-conversation/protecting-imperiled-pollinators/>

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**Cull Invasives HIP Weed Wrangles and Strike Team** There's no shortage of opportunities to help with invasive removal this season at Hamilton County Invasives Partnership (HIP) Weed Wrangles! Visit our website to find details on each event. [www.hcinvasives.org/weedwrangle](http://www.hcinvasives.org/weedwrangle) Volunteers are also invited to join our HIP Strike Team, a group led by experienced volunteers and/or SWCD staff volunteers who provide technical support and labor to remove invasive species at partner sites. These are typically public use sites such as parks, schools, land trusts, nature reserves, etc. See upcoming Strike Team dates here: [www.hcinvasives.org/striketeam](http://www.hcinvasives.org/striketeam)

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## Resources

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**Interactive Indiana Native Plant Finder** It's the Indiana Native Plant Society's searchable database of Indiana native plants and their pollinators. This colorful, user-friendly tool can filter on numerous characteristics to present an array of plants suited to your site conditions. Garden-friendly natives are noted, as well as plants designated as caterpillar and pollinator magnets. The Finder holds 140 complete records now and will grow to 500 as details are added. Find it at <https://finder.indiananativeplants.org>.

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**Videos Indiana Native Plant Society YouTube Channel** Enjoy a break from gardening chores with videos on landscaping with natives, propagating with native seeds, native plant conservation, nature preserves, land stewardship, and other goodies. Find them at <https://www.youtube.com/@indiananativeplantsociety8035/playlists>

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**Reference The Gardener's Guide to Prairie Plants** Promising to be the definitive reference on the subject, this thoroughly researched and illustrated handbook is a one-stop compendium for gardeners passionate about native plants and prairie restoration. Author/photographers Neil Diboll of Prairie Nursery and Hilary Cox of our own Indiana Native Plant Society offer details every gardener might need to know to welcome these plants into their landscapes. Available in bookstores and online.

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**How-To Rain Gardens for Homeowners** Rain gardens are not just landscape features-- they absorb water and pollutants, reduce runoff, protect water quality, and prevent flooding. Claire Lane, Urban Conservationist with Hamilton County SWCD is eager for you to know how to manage stormwater on your property and clean it of contaminants. The SWCD is offering a free booklet online and downloadable [here](#). Print copies are available at the SWCD office Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

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**How-To Prairie Up! Designing a Small Meadow Garden with Commonly Available Native Plants** by Benjamin Vogt. It's easy to be overwhelmed when shopping for new plants, especially when you want to create a wildlife habitat, and plant tags seldom provide enough or even the right information to make informed decisions suitable for our specific site conditions. Drawn from Benjamin's own experience designing and maintaining suburban gardens, this book features lists of which plants to use, in what combinations, and under what conditions. Available at bookstores and online.

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**Design New Directions in the American Landscape (NDAL)** This educational organization is dedicated to the art, culture, and science of ecology-based landscape design. Although the message of ecological design is increasingly popular, our knowledge of how to implement that message and make it successful remains limited. NDAL's conferences for landscape architects and designers regularly feature topics in ecology and sustainability, creatively integrating science and design. They also include topics in anthropology, history, and the arts, providing a rich framework for understanding the full extent of what's possible and required by ecological design. Paired with this approach is a commitment to exploring tangible, practical techniques applicable at diverse scales and contexts. View courses for the Professional, Home Gardener, Students & Educators [here](https://www.ndal.org/). <https://www.ndal.org/>

NOTE: NDAL received the **AHS 2024 Horticultural Innovation Award** as part of the American Horticultural Society's Great American Gardeners Awards. This award is "given to an individual or company whose innovations have made the field of horticulture more sustainable and accessible to all."

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**Podcast Bug Banter with the Xerces Society** Cozy up to your invertebrate friends with this podcast exploring the world of invertebrates and how to help these extraordinary animals. Co-hosts Matthew Shepherd and Rachel Dunham dive into the mysteries of native insects and other invertebrates in North America. Your imagination will travel underground, overhead, and in between as you listen to expert guests share the secrets of tiny creatures that live amongst us but are often unknown. In just half-hour sessions, become an apprentice in the ways we can better share the earth with wildlife and help these precious animals in peril.

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## Inspiration

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**Life Support Doug Tallamy's 4 Universal Landscape Goals** Our landscapes must do the things that enable ecosystems to produce the life support we and every other species require. They must: 1) Support a diverse community of pollinators throughout the growing season. 2) Provide energy for the local food web. 3) Manage the watershed in which they lie. 4) Remove carbon from the atmosphere where it is wreaking havoc on the earth's climate. How well a landscape accomplishes these goals depends on how well we, as landscape managers, choose and deploy the plants on our landscapes. Learn why lawns fail and native plants succeed at these four goals [here](#).

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**Start a New HABITAT!® Homegrown National Park®** Doug Tallamy's remarkable book *Nature's Best Hope* outlines a grassroots approach to conservation that homeowners everywhere can participate in.

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Relying on the initiatives of private individuals, this approach is immune from the whims of government policy, and is practical, effective, and easy. When you've planted some native plants, add your property to the national map of the growing Homegrown National Park. Learn more at [HomegrownNationalPark.org](https://HomegrownNationalPark.org).

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**Garden Travel Tours with Cole Burrell** Coming in 2024, trips to Vietnam, the Hudson Valley, Chile, and more. Contact [Cole Burrell](#) to add your name to the list for advance brochures and registration information and visit the [Garden and Nature Tours](#) website for more information. Registration is now open for Gardens of the Hudson River Valley, June 10-17, 2024. The Hudson River Valley is noted for grand estates of the Gilded Age, impressive wineries, farm-to-table sustainable agriculture, and bucolic scenery made famous by artists of the Hudson River School.