



HortusScope | What's Up in the Central Indiana Gardening Community | [Graphic courtesy creativefabrica.com](https://www.creativefabrica.com)

Yikes! Did you know Indiana had the lowest voter turnout in the country in 2022, and ranked 40th in voter registration? I learned this from Sarah Kautzman, Hoosier Environmental Council's Marketing Manager, who says "Every single vote becomes crucial when voter turnout is low. Your vote truly matters." She's urging everyone to make a pledge to vote this November and tell a different story about the caring and engagement of Indiana citizens. Hoping that you agree,

repeat after me: **I pledge to vote this November to stand up for what matters most to me, my family, my community, and my environment.** Voter registration in Indiana ends October 7.

<https://indianavoters.in.gov/>

Monday, October 7 Herb Society of Central Indiana Garden Gratitudes Our fall Education Night celebrates that our gardens promote physical, mental, and spiritual well-being. Come hear members share stories how gardening serves the gardener and enables the gardener to share with the community. We will also be making bookmarks using plant materials. Please bring any favorite items you would like to include. Enjoy herbal snacks made by our members. Free and open to the public. 6:00 to 8:15 p.m., John Hensel Gov. Center, 10701 N College, Indianapolis. We hope to see you there.

Thursday, October 10 Homegrown National Park Unlawning America with Benjamin Vogt Learn all about transforming your lawn into a resilient, native plant paradise in this crash course with a pioneer in natural garden design. Benjamin Vogt, author of the best-selling *Prairie Up: An Introduction to Natural Garden Design* and *A New Garden Ethic*, brings his expertise to guide you in creating sustainable, wildlife-friendly landscapes. His virtual presentation will cover selecting native plants for your specific locale; the benefits of matrix design for climate resilience; site preparation, management, and maintenance strategies for long-term success; and tips for removing lawn and advocating for rewilding in urban and suburban landscapes. Fee \$25. 1:30 to 3:00 EDT. Zoom link will be sent upon registration, and a replay will be available following the event. [Register](#)

Saturday, October 12 Ritchie Woods Nature Preserve "Not Just Another Park" Nature lovers and the public are cordially invited to a festival celebrating the 20th anniversary of the city of Fishers' ownership of state-designated Ritchie Woods Nature Preserve, home to three diverse ecosystems protected by law (prairie, forest, swamp) and surrounded by residences, commercial buildings, and an airport. This family-friendly event features cupcakes, poetry, door prizes, remarks by dignitaries, kid's scavenger hunt, craft activity, history, and the chance to connect with fellow Ritchie Woods fans. 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., Ritchie Woods Shelter, 10410 Hague Road, Fishers. Questions? Email friendsofritchiewoods@gmail.com.

Saturday, October 12 Hamilton County Master Gardeners Seminar Transformative Gardens So many of us look at our garden and want to change or transform it, and don't know where to start. Our goal is to provide inspiration and ideas with new ways to think about your yard. This day-long seminar will include what you need to know about your yard – soils, light, types of plants you want, landscapes for bees, benefits of asters and goldenrods, planting for moths. Speakers include: Heather Holm, pollinator conservationist and award winning author, on "Creating and Managing Landscapes for Native Bees" and "Asters and Goldenrods"; Jeanette Jaskula, President of Friends of the Sands, on "Welcome to the Dark

Side: Gardening for Moths”; Taylor Metz, Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture at Ball State, on “The Art of the Long View – a Sustainable Design Tradition”; and Bill DeBoer of Woody Warehouse on “Native Landscape Solutions that Enhance Local Ecology.” 8:45 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Registration info available soon at www.hcmga.org.

Monday, October 14 Indianapolis Hosta Society Architecture in the Garden: From Fountains to Fences to Pink Flamingos Plants are typically the stars of a garden, but it is the complimentary “non-plants” that set the stage. Landscape architect David Gorden, with Mark M. Holeman, Inc. – Landscape Architects and Contractors, has been designing landscapes for more than 35 years. His presentation will explore the many elements that give structure, interest, and charm to a garden. They may be more integral than the plants themselves. Free and open to the public. 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., Coxhall Mansion & Gardens, 11669 Towne Road, Carmel.

Thursday, October 17 Central Indiana Land Trust Coexisting with Wildlife: Tales and Tips from a Wildlife Rescuer The field of wildlife rescue holds fascination for people of all ages. If you (or your children) enjoy learning about the wildlife living in our midst, CILTI’s final Golden Hour is for you. Licensed wildlife rehabilitator Becca Orr will be your guide for the evening. She’ll share stories of wildlife rescue and may even bring ambassador turtles. Learn how to live in harmony with your wild animal neighbors, what to do if you find a baby animal, and more. Space is limited, and [RSVP](#) is required. 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., Daugherty House at [Oliver’s Woods](#), 8825 River Road, Indianapolis.

Saturday, October 19 Garfield Park Conservatory Soap-Making Workshop Join us for our annual workshop to learn how to make a cold or hot method of making soap with a crockpot. There will be recipes, handouts, and herbal munchies. Registration is required and cost is \$5.00. Contact Garfield Conservatory at garfieldgardenconservatory.org or call 317-327-7183.

Saturday, October 26 Indiana Native Plant Society Annual Conference Going Wild: Nourishing the Web of Life This day-long in-person conference aims to provide the know-how to help Hoosiers appreciate, grow, study, and conserve Indiana’s native plants. It’s one of Indiana’s premier nature events, drawing environmentalists, gardeners, nature photographers, bird lovers, landscapers, ecologists, plant lovers, and more. The conference includes exhibits by sponsors and non-profit organizations, along with a book sale, a native seed swap, and pre-conference hikes and workshops. 8:40 to 4:30, The Forum Events Center, Fishers. Fees, speakers, activities and all the details begin [here](#). Register for the conference by October 12 and for pre-conference activities by October 20.

Tuesday, October 29 Indiana Phenology iNaturalist Training Updates from iNaturalist now include enhanced plant phenology annotation capabilities. In addition to the improved flowering and fruiting options, you can now annotate observations for leaf phenology. This is a significant boost for Indiana Phenology’s efforts to utilize iNaturalist data for studying plant phenology in Indiana. We’re offering a virtual training session for those interested in helping us annotate Indiana iNaturalist observations. Fee \$5. 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. [Register](#)

Monday, November 11 Indianapolis Hosta Society An Evening with the Mad Botanist Bill McKnight (aka The Mad Botanist) is a professionally trained botanist, experienced gardener and educator. A native of Illinois, he attended EIU, U of Mich and the U of Ill. He is comfortable dealing with flowering plants and cryptogams (i.e., fungi, lichens, bryophytes and ferns) as well as ornamental and food plant issues. He has an extensive ethnobotanical background and understands the peculiarities presented by the bistate climate and soil, both in natural and human influenced environs. He wrote, illustrated and self-

published (2016) *Rantings of a Mad Botanist*, a book intended to help gardeners and property managers make fewer mistakes. The book emphasizes stewardship and central Indiana but is more broadly applicable. He lives at and gardens a three-acre property on the NE side of Indianapolis. Free and open to the public. 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., Coxhall Mansion & Gardens, 11669 Towne Road, Carmel.

New for Kids WonderGrove for Birds, in collaboration with Homegrown National Park, has launched free educational videos for K-2 students. These fun episodes teach kids the importance of creating bird habitats in their yards. [The first seven episodes are available now](#)

Citizen Science Indiana Phenology Training Sessions Our fall lineup includes training sessions for those interested in documenting phenology in Indiana (timing of seasonal changes). Our Backyard Observer Training covers everything you need to know to use Nature's Notebook in your own yard or nearby natural area. The Using iNaturalist session provides in-depth training on how to use iNaturalist to document biodiversity (and phenology). The Advanced iNaturalist Training covers how to identify and annotate observations (your own or those of others)—a great citizen science activity during the winter months or when you are unable to explore outdoors. For additional information or to register visit www.indianaphenology.org/events.

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. Your supporting donation cheerfully accepted at 6911 Cabernet Way, Indianapolis, IN 46278, check made out to Wendy Ford.

Volunteer Opportunities

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/>

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 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

Citizen Science Mapping Ground Nesting Bees Cornell University researchers have built a community science project, "Project GNBees," focused on mapping aggregations of diverse ground-nesting bees.

They hope to facilitate the study of their nesting requirements as well as the biology of these bees across space and through time. They are asking a broad community of participants to upload observations they have made of ground-nesting bee aggregations to their iNaturalist project, adding to more than 3,000 observations of over 300 bee species worldwide. GNBees: [website](#) iNaturalist: [project](#) Instagram: [projectGNBee](#).

Resources

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>.

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, rain gardens, and other goodies. Find them at <https://www.youtube.com/@indiananativeplantsociety8035/playlists>

Video Cover Crop Training Visit Marion County SWCD's Soil Health Guide and check out the updates to the cover crop section. We've added the Indiana Cover Crop Tool and a 20-minute training video on how to use it. <https://marionswcd.org/indiana-cover-crop-tool-for-small-farms-and-gardens/>

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.

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.

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.

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."

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.

Pollinator Partnership Pollinator-Friendly Solar Habitat Solar energy is good for the environment. It can be even better when integrated with habitat that supports pollinators and biodiversity. Find out how to make solar pollinator habitat work for you and how Pollinator Partnership can help ensure that your project is successful. Pollinator-friendly solar habitat refers to co-locating deep-rooted and regionally appropriate native grasses, wildflowers, and non-invasive cover-crop plants within solar sites, to provide multiple benefits for solar operation and maintenance, the environment, and surrounding communities. [Learn more](#)

Best Practices Good Reasons to Have Your Soil Tested A soil test is a process by which elements are measured for their "plant available" content within the sample. The quantity of available nutrients in the sample determines the amount of fertilizer or other soil amendments that are recommended. A soil test also measures soil pH, organic matter, and cation exchange capacity (CEC). These analyses indicate whether lime, elemental sulfur, or iron is needed and, if so, how much to apply. [More from Hamilton County Soil & Water Conservation District](#)

Inspiration

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](#).

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. 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.

Garden Travel Tours with Cole Burrell Coming up, trips to Chile, Costa Rica, 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.