



HortusScope | What's Up in the Central Indiana Gardening Community | *Illustration courtesy of englezadenota10.wordpress.com*

Wednesday, March 5 Herb Society of Central Indiana The Many Countenances of Chamomile

Get ready to discover or rediscover the history, propagation, and uses of Chamomile, the International Herb of the Year. Our members will be presenting, but be ready to share your experiences with Chamomile too. Free and open to the public. We meet at 6:00 and enjoy member-made herbal foods and learn from our presenters at 6:30. John Hensel Gov. Center, 10701 N College Ave, Indianapolis.

Free Parking available.

www.herbsocietyofcentralindiana.org

Thursday, March 6 New Directions in the American Landscape (NDAL) At Home with Nature: Beauty, Ecology, and Experience

A free virtual session for the home gardener, with NDAL

founder Larry Weaner, FAPLD. Even on the smallest residential property, sharing garden decisions with nature changes everything. In this eye-opening presentation, Larry will illustrate how an ecology-based, brains-over-brawn approach to home landscaping can reduce management needs, increase desirable wildlife habitat, and enhance the visual and intellectual experience of being in your yard. 6:00 to 6:45 p.m. ET. Recording viewable to registrants for three months after the live date. Register at NDAL.org.

Monday, March 10 Indianapolis Hosta Society (Carmel) Tool-Up for Gardening: Top 10 Garden

Tools with Steve Cline Steve is a Marion County Advanced Master Gardener from the class of 2015. An avid collector of garden tools, he will share his favorites and their proper use, care, and maintenance. Steve volunteers at Holiday Park in Indy, serves as a team leader at the Demonstration Garden at the State Fairgrounds, and works at his Church on the Grounds Team taking care of its 81-acre campus. Free and open to the public. 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., Coxhall Mansion & Gardens, 11669 Towne Rd., Carmel.

Wednesday, March 12 Hamilton County Invasives Partnership (Carmel) Landscaping with Natives

Workshop Discover how to transform your yard with native plants! Join us for a free educational presentation, the launch of free native landscape plans, and the opportunity to connect with local native plant retailers and landscape designers. Learn how to create a beautiful, sustainable landscape that supports local wildlife. 6:30 to 8:00 p.m., Cool Creek Park Nature Center, 2000 E 151st Street, Carmel.

[Register](#)

Saturday, March 15 Herb Society of Central Indiana Garfield Park Conservatory Workshop: Starting Herbs from Seed

Join us for our annual seed starting workshop and receive handouts, recipes, herbal munchies, and a make-and-take. Fee \$6. 10:00 to 11:30 a.m., Garfield Park Conservatory, 2505 Conservatory Drive, Indianapolis. Register at garfieldparkconservatory.org or call 317-327-7138.

Saturday, March 15 Morgan County Master Gardeners (Mooresville) Gardenfest & Pansy Sale Yard and garden vendors, free trees & seeds while supplies last, expert speakers on garden topics. Master Gardener education hours. Sara's Goodies food truck on site. Admission \$2.00 cash or card. 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m., Mooresville Christian Academy, 4271 State Road 144, Mooresville.

Thursday, March 20 Indiana Native Plant Society Central Chapter Native Plant Habitat During Wildlife Baby Season Join us online to learn why Hoosier wildlife thrives with native plants and how you can help during wildlife baby season. Our urban environment may create challenges for wildlife, leading to orphaned or abandoned babies. As the caretaker of plots of wildlife habitat, our expert speaker, Rebecca Hamon, wants to educate us on what to do if we encounter wildlife in crisis. Rebecca is the Director of Hoosier Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation, a wildlife center that takes injured, orphaned, and sick native wildlife in Central Indiana. This event is free and open to the public. 10:00 to 11:00 p.m. ET. Register for Zoom link access at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/native-plant-habitat-during-wildlife-baby-season-tickets-1248764330729?>

Thursday, March 20 Wild Ones Seminar The Advocacy Power of Public Native Gardens A thought-provoking panel discussion exploring how public and demonstration gardens inspire action, connect people with native plants, and drive community engagement. Join Nicole Machuca (Field Museum) as she shares research on how public gardens influence behaviors and foster stewardship. Hear from the Wild Ones Capital Region NY and San Diego Chapters as they showcase real-world examples of demonstration gardens in action. Kelly Capuzzi (Wild Ones Hocking Hills) will moderate a panel discussion on turning appreciation into advocacy through signage, workshops, and community engagement strategies. This webinar is free and will be recorded for later viewing. 6:00 pm CT / 7:00 pm ET. [Register](#) to receive the link.

Thursday thru Sunday, March 20 thru 23 Art in Bloom at Newfields Art and nature collide inside the Indianapolis Museum of Art at Newfields. This year's floral festivities feature 55 flower arrangements by top designers from near and far, each one inspired by a work on view in the IMA Galleries. Green thumbs and flower fanatics will enjoy free daily demonstrations covering topics from arranging grocery store flowers to how to incorporate edible flowers into your spring garden. Flower crowns and cocktails available for purchase. Opens to members at 10:00 a.m.; to the public at 11:00 a.m. Tickets include general admission. [Purchase tickets](#)

Friday, March 21 Newfields Fête of Florals Step into spring in style at this first soirée of its kind at [Art in Bloom](#). Join in on floral festivities, meet some of this year's designers, and sip and savor from a selection of fare from five local chefs paired with bespoke cocktails, including this year's signature, The Gallery Gardener. At 8 PM, don't miss the excitement of the awards ceremony, where we'll award the best of the best with ribbons for Excellence in Art, Excellence in Nature, and Crowd Favorite. Advance tickets required: \$75 Members, \$85 Public. 7:00 to 10:00 p.m., Newfields, 4000 Michigan Rd, Indianapolis. Register at <https://discovernewfields.org/art-bloom/fete-florals>.

April 1 thru May 31 Indiana Native Plant Society Florathon 2025 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/>

Thursday, April 3 Indiana Native Plant Society Central Chapter Project Wingspan, Working Together for Vital Habitat: Best Practices We welcome Maraiah Russell, Indiana Project Wingspan Coordinator, to tell us how we can get involved and bring more pollinator habitat to our area. Commercially available, regionally native seed can be hard to find and expensive. Project Wingspan aims to make this seed available to committed landowners/land managers free of charge and provides training and support to volunteer teams and individuals throughout the state so they can identify target plant species and responsibly collect seed for this effort. The community connections made through this conservation work lay the foundation for long lasting stewardship of natural areas. This event is free and open to the public. 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. ET. Register to receive the Zoom link at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/project-wingspan-working-together-for-vital-habit-best-practices-tickets-1203977181159?>

Saturday, April 12 Herb Society of Central Indiana Spring Symposium: Tea-Riffic Chamomile Mark your calendars and sign up by March 29 for this 23rd annual symposium feature chamomile, the Herb of the Year. New location this year: Carmel United Methodist Church, Door 3, 621 S Rangeline Road, Carmel. Doors open at 8:00 a.m. with program beginning at 9:00. Register at <https://sites.google.com/view/herb-society-of-central-indian/symposium-2025>.

Get HIP March is Invasive Species Action Month in Hamilton County The Hamilton County Invasives Partnership (HIP) is calling on residents to act in the fight against invasive species, whether by removing invasive species, attending an educational workshop, or making the switch to native plants. To learn about many ways to get involved and make a difference during Invasive Species Action Month, visit hcinvasives.org or follow @hamiltonswcd on social media.

Advocacy Opp Hoosier Environmental Council Bill Watch HEC is diligently scanning for environmental bills to share with us. Check their [2025 Bill Watch page](#) for regular updates and new additions to the bills HEC is following. Count on HEC to keep you updated and to provide you with context so you can call and write to your representatives as needed.

Movie Night Buy Now! The Shopping Conspiracy It's a new Netflix documentary written and directed by Emmy Award nominee Nic Stacey (*The World According to Jeff Goldblum*). The architects of our collective desire for endless consumption reveal how corporations are hell-bent on increasing profits, how they convince unsuspecting consumers time and time again to part with their money, and what happens when all our discarded purchases make their way to landfills. Commentators who witnessed the inner workings of corporations from Amazon to Apple sit down to talk about the unsavory practices their former employers are still using. But while we're all being encouraged to quench a bottomless thirst for more stuff, it's the future generations and our environment that end up paying the price. [Trailer](#)

Scholarship Opp Indiana Wildlife Federation Are you a sophomore in college? You may be eligible for the 2025 Holt Scholarship! The IWF Endowment awards a \$1,000 scholarship in memory of Charles Holt, a lifelong member and champion of fish and wildlife resources. Applicants must be at or above a sophomore level and studying a field related to resource conservation or environmental education. Applications are accepted until June 15. Visit www.indianawildlife.org/Holt-Scholarship to apply.

Plant Shopping! Indiana Wildlife Federation Our Native Plant Sale is back and bigger than ever in 2025! We are continuing our partnership with Stantec Native Plant Nursery with an expanded collection of all new plant kits! AND we have a smaller, bespoke plant sale through our partnership with National Wildlife Federation and Garden For Wildlife. Orders for Stantec kits must be placed by April 1st. For

more info on some of the plants, don't forget to check out our Native Plant Finder! For our Stantec sale, visit <https://indianawildlife.org/native-plant-sale/>. For our Garden for Wildlife sale, visit <https://fundraising.gardenforwildlife.com/uf0fSv>.

Plant Shopping! Hamilton County SWCD Native Plant Kits to Support Local Ecosystems An easy way to incorporate Indiana-native plants into your landscapes. These pre-selected kits provide an affordable and convenient way to establish native gardens that support pollinators, improve soil health, and enhance biodiversity. Orders are open **through March 27** at www.hamiltonswcd.org/plantsale, with pick-up scheduled for later this spring. To further support residents in transitioning to native landscaping, the SWCD has also launched new residential native landscape plans, now available at www.hamiltonswcd.org.

Photo Notes Letting my dog out this morning, I'm greeted by the same bleak mid-winter palette of browns and greys as yesterday. And yet. Today's sunshine has turned the morning dew into a scattering of sparkling jewels across the lawn. I see magic in Nature's designs, kindling a spark of joy in anticipation of springtime gardening. The colorful blooms to come. The tender work of sowing and gathering. The soothing pace of editing out the weeds. She's rallying me to carry on despite the urge to run and hide from the world. I will try to rise to the challenge, keeping Nature close and doing my best to protect her and the community she sustains. Wish me courage. Wish us all courage. (And happy Martisor to our Romanian friends.)

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 GNBee,” 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. GNBee: [website](#) iNaturalist: [project](#) Instagram: [projectGNBee](#).

Resources

Winter Plant ID Hamilton County SWCD says winter plant identification offers a fresh way to explore familiar landscapes, focusing on subtle details like structure and texture rather than leafy foliage. Start with the bark—its texture can be smooth, deeply furrowed, or even peeling, offering valuable clues that remain visible all winter. Look closely at branch patterns; some trees, like maples and ashes, have opposite branching, while others, like oaks and elms, are alternate. Buds provide additional hints, so bring a hand lens to inspect their size, shape, and arrangement. Study the silhouette of trees and shrubs from a distance, as their shape can help identify species. Bright winter colors, like the red of dogwoods or the yellow of willows, are also helpful. Finally, pay attention to any remaining fruits or seed heads, like those of American beech with its golden-brown leaves, or the bright berries of winterberry. With a field guide and patience, you can uncover Indiana’s subtle winter beauty through the quiet art of plant identification. Find many resources at <https://www.hamiltonswcd.org/news-articles/winter-tree-identification?eType=EmailBlastContent&eId=16ce21dd-8bc8-49ae-84e7-344d10df1f58>

Mulch Madness Hamilton County SWCD says don’t leave your garden soil bare over the winter. They back this up with a good resource on all kinds of mulch [here](#).

For the 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. Take a look at <https://homegrownnationalpark.org/hnp-kids/>.

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 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.