



## HortusScope | What's Up in the Central Indiana Gardening Community | Photo by Wendy Ford

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**Monday, June 1 Herb Society of Central Indiana Gardening for Your Health** Speaker Karen Burr, Owner and Clinical Herbalist at Materia Medica, will help us understand and remember that gardens can be used for more than beauty. Karen founded the Restorative Herbalism Center to champion wild food and regenerative healing for mind, body, and spirit. She has deep medical knowledge of folk medicine,

wild food education, and herbal remedies. Free, snacks provided. 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., Fort Harrison Public Library, 9330 E 56th St, Indianapolis.

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**Tuesday, June 2 Indiana Daylily-Iris Society My Adventures with the Daylily** Join us as Nikki Schmith from Worden, Illinois, talks about growing beautiful daylilies in the Midwest. Nikki is the recent past president of the American Daylily Society, a senior exhibition judge, a garden judge, and an exhibition clinic instructor. Her garden includes a rotating collection of around 500 daylily cultivars along with many other perennials. She has registered several unique cultivars of daylilies. 6:30 p.m., Clermont Lions Club, 3201 Tansel Rd, Clermont.

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**Saturday, June 6 Indiana Native Plant Society Central Chapter Identify Birds and Orchids at Eagle Creek Park** Join us for a fun, members-only hike to spot cool birds and vibrant orchids up close! We'll be hiking through the beautiful trails of Eagle Creek, a great location to search for breeding birds and, with some luck, blooming orchids, led by Wes Homoya with the Indiana Audubon Society. Perfect for nature lovers and anyone looking to learn more about local wildlife while enjoying fresh air and stunning views. Wes is planning a 2- to 3-mile route on mostly flat terrain, starting on paved paths and continuing onto grassy trails. There may be a few muddy spots depending on conditions. This event is limited to current INPS members. 10:00 a.m. to noon. Meet up at Eagle Creek Earth Discovery Center. Registration opens May 6 at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/hike-to-id-birds-and-orchids-at-eagle-creek-tickets-1983257144507>.

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**Saturday & Sunday, June 6 & 7 Bloomington Garden Club 37<sup>th</sup> Annual Summer Garden Walk** The event features 6 exceptional gardens, along with the Flower Show at Hilltop Gardens. Proceeds from the \$10 ticket support the area children's gardening education programs and other civic plantings and beautification projects. Hours: Saturday 10:00 to 2:00, Sunday, noon to 4:00. Further information at [www.bloomingtongardenclub.org](http://www.bloomingtongardenclub.org).

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**Friday, June 12 Marion County Soil & Water Conservation District State Fair Glass Barn Rain Garden Tour** The Glass Barn features a unique rain garden with more than 15 different native species. You'll learn about how the rain garden functions and learn how to divide and transplant natives for your rain garden projects at home. Register for the event [here](#).

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**Saturday, June 13 Marion County Soil & Water Conservation District Rain Garden Home Tour** We'll check out two home rain garden projects located in the Lower Fall Creek watershed and one other nearby property featuring native plantings. You'll learn about how these unique projects were designed

and implemented and see native plants at work managing stormwater—inspiration for your own project at home. Register for the event [here](#).

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**Tuesday, June 16 Film Screening: The Extraordinary Caterpillar (Lebanon)** Take a peek into the dazzling world of Nature’s tiniest and mightiest superheroes! Over 98% of the living world on Earth is smaller than a bee. Yet humans view the planet as a world centered around themselves. Landscapes are deconstructed to suit human needs, often with little regard for the natural systems that sustain the food web. This extraordinary film features scientists and community activists Sam Jaffe and the Caterpillar Lab, Doug Tallamy, and David Wagner and fabulous photos. Sponsored by Homegrown National Park. 5:30 to 7:00 p.m., Lebanon Public Library, 104 E Washington St, Lebanon. Watch the trailer at <https://homegrownnationalpark.org/extraordinary-caterpillar/>.

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**Saturday, June 20 Indianapolis Hosta Society Tour of Members’ Gardens** Five gardens will be on tour throughout the Indianapolis Metro Area, with opportunities to purchase plants and garden-related items at some of the gardens. See how gardeners use hostas to transform shady spots, shape borders, and create beautiful backyard retreats. Whether you're just discovering hostas or have grown them for years, you'll leave with fresh ideas and maybe new gardening friends. This is a ticketed tour open to the public, and IHS members receive free admission. 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. ET. Purchase tickets using the QR code on our Facebook Event page or at this [link](#).

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**Saturday, June 27 Gardens of Zionsville Tour: Century Homes in Bloom** Tour seven private gardens and bid on container gardens donated by local gardeners and nurseries. Then take in a juried exhibition featuring Indiana artists depicting flora and fauna. Special event: Garden Tour Kickoff Party the evening before (live music, appetizers, wine & beer). Tour and party package available. Proceeds benefit the SullivanMunce Cultural Center. Saturday tour 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Details and tickets at <https://www.sullivanmunce.org/garden-tour.html>

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**Hot Tips How to Talk to Your Neighbors About Pesticides** If you garden for pollinators, there’s a good chance you already know to reduce your own pesticide use as much as possible. However, your neighbors might not be on the same page yet. The pesticides they use on their yard can easily drift over to your space. Talking with a neighbor about pesticides can feel challenging, so the Xerces Society has put together strategies and talking points to help you start navigating the conversation! [Learn more](#)

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**Share Your Best Shot! Wild Ones 2026 Photo Contest** Each year, Wild Ones members across the country share stunning images of native plants, wildlife, gardens, and community spaces that inspire others to create habitat where they live. Wild Ones’ mission is all about cultivating community and together taking action to heal our environment through landscaping with native plants. We rely on the contest photos to help inspire others to make this critical shift in their landscaping practices. This year’s contest categories seek to emphasize the joy, the connections, the journey, the beauty, and the healing experienced by both the people and the land through the native landscaping movement. This is a Wild Ones member benefit. If you are not yet a member, now is a great time to [join and participate](#).

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**Worthy Cause Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation** Xerces mobilizes communities to establish wildlife habitat by distributing free, climate-smart, pesticide-free, native pollinator plants (they call them habitat kits) to partners. These kits establish vital habitats to sustain pollinators, while capturing carbon, beautifying landscapes, and bringing nature to areas that need it most. Xerces has supported more than 2,400 projects and given away over 550,000 plants to help pollinators and people. Additional funding will help them expand into new regions in the coming years. [Learn more](#)

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**Worthy Cause Indiana Phenology** When young people record their first bloom or track migrating birds, they are building scientific literacy and a stronger connection to the natural world around them. Indiana Phenology brings environmental education into classrooms, parks, and neighborhoods across the state. Through all-ages community programs like [Schoolyard Phenology](#) and [Phenology Trails](#), participants learn to observe seasonal change and contribute to real scientific data. If education rooted in local science matters to you, consider a gift of \$25 or \$50 to help expand access this year. [Donate](#)

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**Cool Effort Join the Hoosier Habitats Challenge!** In March 2026, Earth Charter Indiana and the Indiana Wildlife Federation launched the Hoosier Habitats Challenge. The goal is to certify multi-county regions and communities across the entire state of Indiana in the National Wildlife Federation's Community Wildlife Habitat program. Once certified, this Statewide Network of Community Wildlife Habitats will be the first of its kind in the United States, reaching all corners of Indiana. This is an effort anyone can participate in! Find out what region you belong in and get started earning points. Every action you take not only works to further your region's success but also provides a beneficial service to our wildlife. [How you can participate](#)

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**Design with Nature New Directions in the American Landscape (NDAL)** New to ecology-based gardening and landscape design and not sure where to start? View founder Larry Weaner's free introductory session, [At Home with Nature: Beauty, Ecology, and Experience](#) and watch for spring virtual sessions at [www.ndal.org](http://www.ndal.org).

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**Plant Shopping! Indiana Wildlife Federation Fall 2026 Native Plant Sale** No matter the size of your garden or your level of expertise, we have what you need to build a thriving native garden at home. It may seem like a small thing, to plant a few natives around your downspout or under a shady tree, but our wildlife don't think that's small at all. When we all work together to transform our gardens into natives, we amplify each other's efforts and have a HUGE impact! We've partnered with Stantec Nursery to offer professionally designed kits with a variety of choices for every garden. Each kit is 50 plugs with 5 plugs in 10 different species. Details at <https://indianawildlife.org/native-plant-sale/>. We also partner with National Wildlife Federation and Garden for Wildlife to offer customizable orders that let you get exactly what you want for your garden. Details at <https://gardenforwildlife.com/pages/find-native-plants#>.

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**Got You Covered Marion County SWCD Cover Crop Program** This program provides cover crop seeds to small farmers and gardeners at no cost. Application prioritization will be based on the quality of the applicant's cover crop plan, order of application, and SWCD funding capacity. Applicants will be notified of approval decisions on April 1, May 1, July 1, and August 1. The SWCD will order cover crops from reputable seed companies to be shipped to your shipping address. Marion County applications will be prioritized. If you need assistance with developing a cover plan before applying, visit [marionswcd.org/soilhealth/](http://marionswcd.org/soilhealth/), the cover crop section.

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**New Grant Program Hamilton County Soil & Water Conservation District** HCSWCD has been awarded a \$100,000 Clean Water Indiana grant to support invasive species management efforts across Hamilton County. Through this three-year grant, \$94,000 will be distributed directly to Hamilton County residents as cost-share funding to remove invasive species and restore native landscapes—efforts that improve water quality, reduce erosion, and strengthen local ecosystems. The program is closely aligned with the Hamilton County Invasives Partnership (HIP), a countywide collaborative effort focused on education, outreach, and on-the-ground invasive species control. HCSWCD will introduce landowner toolkits

designed to help smaller property owners get started managing invasive species. These toolkits will include essential equipment such as pruners, loppers, herbicide application tools, safety gear, and other supplies to support safe and effective removal. For more information, visit [www.hamiltonswcd.org](http://www.hamiltonswcd.org).

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**Grants & Scholarships South Central Indiana Master Gardener Association SCIMGA Gives** SCIMGA is offering two funding programs to promote the participation and education of the community in good gardening practices. The Scholarship Program is for students seeking degrees or certificates in horticulture and related disciplines. The Grant Program is for organizations implementing sustainable horticulture and related projects. Residents of Bartholomew, Brown, Decatur, Jackson, Jennings, Johnson and Shelby Counties are eligible to apply for these funds (max of \$500). More information is available at [SCIMGA.org](http://SCIMGA.org) under Grants and Scholarships.

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**Cost-Share Grants Marion County Soil & Water Conservation District** The SWCD is administering a 319 cost share grant program for water-quality enhancing rain gardens and bioswales within a critical area in the Lower Fall Creek watershed, highlighted in yellow on this [map](#). Visit <https://marionswcd.org/water-sheds/> for program participation requirements, cost share amounts available, application scoring criteria, and review processes.

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**Classes Alice's Garden** Enjoy quality time with family or friends while learning a brand-new skill and take home a plant-themed masterpiece you've made with your own hands! Alice's Garden, 3205 W 71st St, Indianapolis. Details and fees at <https://www.alicesgardenindy.com/events>.

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**Photo Notes** This is our Indiana native purpleflowering raspberry, *Rubus odoratus*. I enjoy looking at it in my she-cave, where a bench and sheltering shrubs invite contemplation and an alternative view of my garden. This bramble's low stature and leaf texture make it a great filler in the landscape.

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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.

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## Volunteer Opportunities

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**Restoring Nature Meet 3D NatureConnect** We're a non-profit marketplace fueling nature restoration in the real world. Nature organizations with expert skills use our platform to collaborate with K-12 schools, youth organizations, civic groups, retirement communities, and businesses seeking volunteer opportunities to implement practical, high-impact projects. For their part, nature organizations are able to publish projects related to nature and the environment, as well as track volunteer hours and other analytics to power their organization to the next level of achievement. [Learn more](#)

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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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**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](#).

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## Resources

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**Save Our State Bug Six Ways to Make Sure Fireflies Survive** Firefly season has come and gone but brought with it the rumor that this may be the end of their dazzling summertime displays. While many fireflies are in serious trouble, Xerces Society staff have studied the situation and determined there are many things people can do to help. [Learn more](#)

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**Our Insect Friends Wings: Essays on Invertebrate Conservation** This donor-supported magazine circulates to active members of the Xerces Society. The latest issue explores three very different ways to protect invertebrates: partnering with growers and food companies to create habitat on farmlands; scientists reintroducing a butterfly into its ancient haunts; and Xerces' volunteer ambassadors connecting with people. We hope these pages will inspire others to take action for the invertebrates of their community. [Read now](#)

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**&^%\$#@ Mosquitoes! Don't Spray, Build a Bucket** Sick of mosquitos? We can all agree that mosquitos suck, and nobody wants a cool summer evening interrupted by these biting pests! Unfortunately, commercial mosquito fogging and lawn treatments indiscriminately kill all insects, eliminating beneficial insects along with pests. Some studies have shown that lawn treatments actually increase local mosquito populations by killing predatory insects that prey upon them, while mosquitos can quickly reproduce and move back in. Wildlife depends on a complex web of interactions, and indiscriminate mosquito treatments interrupt this web, harming not only insects but beloved wildlife like birds, bats and frogs that rely on them for their survival. Help wildlife and help yourself, make a mosquito bucket today! [Learn more](#)

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**Stronger Together How to Build Your Conservation Community** At the Xerces Society, we preach that invertebrate conservation takes only one person and a little bit of habitat space to help a whole lot of bugs! Yet we know there are bigger challenges for the planet beyond our backyards that are going to be solved only by working together. Building our conservation community has practical benefits—it helps us share ideas and resources and tackle bigger, more ambitious projects—but perhaps even more important, community gives us a sense of belonging, support, and hope that lightens the load and keeps us coming back to the causes we care about. In recognition of Earth Week, the staff of the Xerces Society have come up with a whole collection of ideas to grow your conservation community—and have fun along the way! <https://xerces.org/blog/stronger-together-how-to-build-your-conservation-community-this-earth-week>

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**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>

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**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/>.

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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 Growing Pollinator-Safe Plants: What Nurseries Can Do (and How You Can Help)**

Many nursery plants, even plants labeled as pollinator-friendly, can be treated with pesticides that remain in or on the plant and can cause harm to pollinators after you bring them home. How can you, as a consumer, make sure that your plants are safe for pollinators? What can nursery growers do to ensure plants are safer for bees and other wildlife? In this video, we feature stories from innovative nursery growers and highlight practices nurseries can use to reduce pesticide risks to pollinators.

<https://youtu.be/jcdvTNM5acw?si=0Wjbx3m9GiblCn9a>

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

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**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/>

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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. [Check it out](#)

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**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

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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](#)

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**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](#)

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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. 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](http://HomegrownNationalPark.org).

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**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. Coming up: Gardens of Andalusia, May 8–19, 2026; Tanzania Adventure, October 27–November 9, 2026.