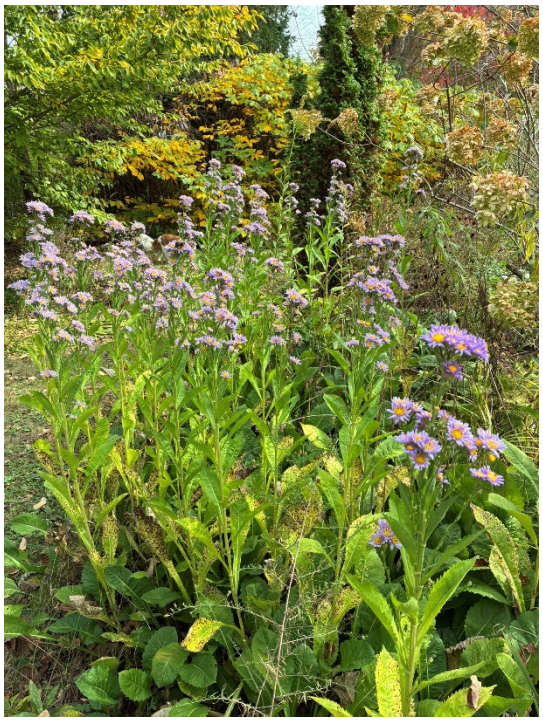


HortusScope | What's Up in the Central Indiana Gardening Community | Photo by Wendy Ford

Thursday, November 12 Crown Hill **Sedges have more than Edges: The Incredible Life of These Grass-Like Plants** Sedges belong to a plant family distinct from grasses, and a key identifying feature is their triangular stems, often remembered by the phrase "sedges have edges." Botanist and ecologist Nathanael Pilla will demonstrate how they are more than just their edges. Purchase tickets in advance online ($10); no tickets sold at the gate. 6:00 to 7:00 p.m., Gothic Chapel, 3402 Boulevard Place (enter the 34th Street gate). Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. https://crownhillhf.org/tours-events/speaker-series/

Wednesday, November 18 New Directions in the American Landscape (NDAL) **Lawn to Meadow: A Light and Gradual Transition** Webinar presented by Larry Weaner, FAPLD, & Sara Weaner Cooper. By gradually applying a series of light-touch actions, you can achieve the lawn-to-meadow transition organically without breaking your back, sparking ecological angst, or infuriating your neighbors. These actions can include strategic plant selection, timed mowing, selective height cutting, pH manipulation, organic herbicide application, and a phased planting approach. Larry will illustrate case studies that exemplify the technical underpinnings behind this approach from a landscape designer's perspective. Sara will discuss her lawn-to-meadow conversion from a homeowner's perspective. 3:00 to 4:15 p.m. ET. Details and registration at https://www.ndal.org/upcoming-events/lawn-to-meadow-fall-2026.

Pollinator Friendly **Xerces Society Blog** Towns, cities, and school campuses around the country are working to Bring Back the Pollinators. Xerces Society shares five ways to elevate your community's pollinator-friendly practices, with examples from places around the country that are making it happen: https://xerces.org/blog/five-ways-to-elevate-your-communitys-pollinator-friendly-practices

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Resources **Conservation Incentives for Small Farms** USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is accepting applications for conservation programs from agricultural producers in Indiana. Visit the Indiana Small Farms Conservation website to learn more about the process and how a program such as the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) may help your farm. Applications accepted year-round, but **apply by December 18, 2026**, to be considered for fiscal year 2027 funding. Start with the video titled "EQIP Roadmap: EQIP Explained for Small Scale Farmers" and contact your SWCD for more information. https://insmallfarms.org/news/eqip-roadmap-explained-for-small-scale-farmers/

Yard Sign **Leave the Leaves for Winter Habitat Protection** If you've provided native and diverse habitat for invertebrates and pollinators during the growing season, helping those invertebrates in the winter is almost as simple as doing nothing. Show your friends and neighbors that you plan to leave the leaves this fall with a beautiful yard sign produced by the Xerces Society. Learn more

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Worthy Cause **Central Indiana Land Trust (CILTI)** We are a member-supported conservation nonprofit working to protect and restore nature in Indiana. We're excited that now through the end of the year, the Efroymson Family Fund is matching every donation up to $250,000. This incredibly generous matching challenge grant is YOUR chance to shine. If you've never given before, now is the perfect time! Your contribution will protect twice as many acres of beautiful nature. It will also make you a key part of our community of support. Donate to CILTI

No Plastics **Challenge** **Hoosier Environmental Council** In collaboration with the Indiana Plastic Reduction Alliance, we've dubbed November Microplastics Month to call attention to tiny plastic particles that pose health risks to humans and wildlife. Microplastics are small pieces of plastic less than 5 millimeters long. Most of them come from larger plastic materials that break down into smaller pieces from UV exposure, wind, and waves. They're found in virtually every ecosystem in the world, including Antarctica. We're challenging you to stop using single-use, plastic water bottles for the month of November. This generates less plastic waste, and drinking tap water exposes you to far fewer microplastics. Plus, everyone who pledges to stop using single-use plastic water bottles in November will be entered into a drawing to win a 3-stage water filter from HEC Green Business reTHink, Inc., a zero-waste store and community hub in Terre Haute. Details

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Grants **Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation** The Xerces Society is now accepting award applications from students in higher education who are studying invertebrate conservation. This annual award invests in the future of our planet and our field by sponsoring the next generation of conservationists. More than ever, we need research on declining invertebrate groups that can contribute to their protection. Applications must be submitted **by December 1, 2026**. Deborah BanDrosky Award Joan Mosenthal DeWind Award

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Go Pro **New Directions in the American Landscape** **Ecology-based Landscape Practice: An Intensive 7-Part Course (On-demand)** Join Landscape Designer Larry Weaner and native plant expert Ian Caton on a deep dive into the integration of restoration ecology and garden design. From technical instruction to personal anecdotes in this on-demand virtual course, Larry and Ian share over 70 years of combined experience on the fine points of designing, planting, and managing ecology-based landscapes. In addition to seven on-demand video sessions, participants will have the opportunity to compare notes and interact with instructors during four live *Conversation and Q&A* sessions. Participants who complete this course now receive an *NDAL Ecology-based Landscape Practitioner* Certificate. CEUs available. One-time fee $695.00. The course is newly available for 1 year after registering. Watch at your leisure! https://www.ndal.org/intensive-course-on-demand

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A Way with Water **Benefits of Bioswales** If you have a drainage swale across your property, need to move water to or from a rain garden, or are concerned about water quality, local flooding issues, wildlife, and providing habitat for pollinators – constructing a bioswale is for you! Bioswales are channels that provide surface drainage while also filtering and encouraging infiltration of water. The channels are planted with water-loving native species that can tolerate fluctuations in moisture levels and provide erosion control. Find out more about bioswales on the Marion County Soil & Water Conservation District website: https://marionswcd.org/drainage/

Classes **New Directions in the American Landscape (NDAL): Landscaping with Nature Masterclass** This four-part virtual master class for home gardeners examines ecology-based landscape practices through the eyes of one of its most highly respected and influential practitioners. Our expansive format will allow Landscape Designer Larry Weaner to provide an intensive guide for creating wildlife-inclusive,

ecologically productive, and highly manageable residential landscapes, turning you from a garden boss to a garden steward. Larry interweaves garden aesthetics with garden ecology, demonstrating how home environments can be both ecologically productive and experientially rich. Fee $145 for on-demand sessions and live Q&As. Also offered is The Masterclass Site Bundle: a site visit and follow-up call with Larry. Register

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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.

Photo Notes 'Tis seed-gathering time as the garden prepares to rest for the cold weather ahead. But look, a glowing aster is just coming into bloom, the last of the bloomers for the season. It's Tatarian aster (*Aster tataricus*), not a native plant but a powerful lure for bumblebees, wasps, and skippers. On a cool morning you can spot numerous bumblers napping among the flowers. As the day warms, myriad flying creatures light on the blossoms, creating a lively show. Beware though, Tatarian aster spreads to form a solid mat, but its vibrant blue flowers with golden centers are worth it to me for this fine end-of-season display.

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

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/

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

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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.

Wildlife **Join the Hoosier Habitats Challenge!** Earth Charter Indiana and the Indiana Wildlife Federation have 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

Resources

Grants **Hamilton County Soil & Water Conservation District** A $100,000 Clean Water Indiana grant supports 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. HCSWCD will introduce landowner toolkits that 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.

Grants **South Central Indiana Master Gardener Association** 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 under Grants and Scholarships.

Wild Ones **How to Talk to Your Neighbors (and Your HOA) About Your Garden**
You planted native. Your neighbor has questions. Maybe your HOA does too. Growing a native landscape is one thing. Talking about it with neighbors, responding to HOA concerns, or explaining why your yard looks different can be another challenge entirely. As part of the 2026 **Less Lawn More Life Challenge**, Wild Ones invites you to join author and community activist Lorraine Johnson for a free webinar on navigating conversations with neighbors, responding to HOA concerns, and building support for native plant gardening in your community. Watch on YouTube.

Xerces Society **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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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

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 **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

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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Soil Health Resources Visit Marion County SWCD's Soil Health webpage to find resources on crop rotation, cover crops, mulching, tarping, native plantings, and soil health in the vegetable garden. marionswcd.org/soilhealth/

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/
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. 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 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

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.