



Conservation News

Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District

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<http://www.colescountyswcd.org>

[facebook.com/ColesCountySWCD](https://www.facebook.com/ColesCountySWCD)

Volume 63 Issue 2

Creating a backyard habitat with native plants offers a lot of benefits

The Coles County SWCD is offering a selection of native plants suited to a variety of habitat types—everything from sunny, dry prairies to wet, shaded pond edges and everything in between! Pre-orders are due by May 5th (see order form on page 3). Native plants are essential to a biodiverse backyard habitat and can provide a variety of other benefits to our local environment as well.

Many native plants, particularly those that are found in prairies, have very deep root systems—some more than 18 feet! These long roots help rainwater infiltrate deeply into the soil and reduce the amount of water that runs off into storm sewers and surface waters like rivers, lakes, and streams. These roots also excel at holding onto soil, preventing erosion. When properly selected for a site, native plants require much less supplemental watering, fertilizer, and pesticides than non-native garden plants, further reducing pollutants that could otherwise enter local water systems.



Plant availability is subject to nursery supply. We often sell out of popular species, so turn in order forms early!

Native plants create habitat for wildlife that is both beneficial to the environment and adds life to your outdoor space. We tend to think of the benefits to obvious pollinators like native bees and butterflies, but these plants also create food and shelter for small animals like birds, toads, small lizards, and more, including microscopic organisms in the soil. Some of these soil microbes help clean up heavy metals, some are specialized for storing carbon, and some help convert nutrients in the soil into forms that plants can use. Healthy soil is full of life, and our local soils were ‘built’ under prairies and woodlands with the native plants, animals, and microbes to match!

Plants thrive in their original environment, and native plants can be just as attractive as traditional landscaping. Native species are likely to establish more quickly, be hardier, and be healthier to boot. When planned properly, native plant gardens provide a wealth of colors, textures, varying heights, and bloom times, resulting in a stunning display over multiple seasons. Check out the bloom colors and seasons for each species in the plant catalog on our website at <http://www.colescountyswcd.org/sales-and-rentals/prairie-plant-sale/>

Need help choosing species or designing your new backyard habitat? Give us a call! Looking for a species we're not offering this year? A few other local organizations are also having native plant sales this year; check with Douglas Hart Nature Center or Grand Prairie Friends to see if they have the species you're looking for!

Upcoming Events:

April:

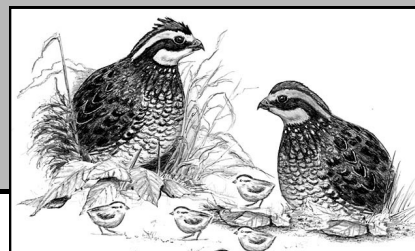
5th—Fish Pickup
7th—Tree Pickup,
CRP General Signup Deadline
11th—Board Meeting
22nd—Forestry Workshop
(See ad on back page for info)

May:

5th—Photo Contest Entries Due,
Native Plant Orders Due
9th—Board Meeting
17th-19th—Native Plant Pickup
29th—Memorial Day (Office Closed)

June:

12th—Board Meeting



Delay mowing of roadsides and waterways from May 15th-Aug. 1st for ground-nesting birds... Don't Mow, Let Them Grow!

Photo Contest Open Until May 5th

Are you an amateur photographer residing in Coles County who would like a chance to enter your photos in a local, state, and nationwide contest? The Coles County SWCD is sponsoring a conservation photo contest to recognize individuals whose pictures are worth more than words!

In addition to the chance to win at the local level, local winners will be entered in the statewide Association of Illinois Soil & Water Conservation District Auxiliary Photo Contest. Winners at the state level will then be submitted to the National Association of Conservation Districts photo contest, where monetary prizes are awarded! Entries must be received by May 5th to be considered for this year's contest.

Photographs can be entered in the following categories:

- Conservation Practices
- Close-Up Conservation
- Conservation in Action
- Conservation Across America
- Youth: Submissions from a photographer under 18 years of age. (Must fit into one of the above categories.)

Complete rules and entry forms are available at <http://www.colescountyswcd.org/events/annual-photo-contest/>

COST SHARE SIGN UP

Coles County SWCD

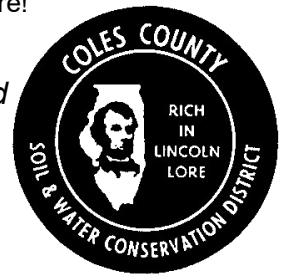
Sign Up by
April 14th!

Practices Include: Cover Crops, No Till/Strip Till, Conservation Cover (Pollinators), Well Decommissioning, Filter Strips, Grassed Waterways, Terraces, Pasture & Hayland Planting, Saturated Buffers, Bioreactors, Rain Gardens, and more!

For practice information and applications call or email:

217-345-3901 x 3

info@colescountyswcd.org



USDA Announces Conservation Reserve Program Signup for 2023

WASHINGTON – Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced (in February) that agricultural producers and private landowners can apply for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) General signup **through April 7, 2023**. CRP is a voluntary conservation program offered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and a key tool in the effort to address climate change and help agricultural communities invest in the long-term well-being of their land and natural resources.

“The Conservation Reserve Program is one of the largest private lands conservation programs in the United States, offering a range of conservation options to farmers, ranchers and landowners,” Vilsack said. “CRP has and continues to be a great fit for farmers with less productive or marginal cropland, helping them re-establish valuable land cover to help improve water quality, prevent soil erosion, and support wildlife habitat. Under this administration, we have made several updates to the program to increase producer interest and enrollment, strengthen the climate benefits of the program and help ensure underserved producers can find a pathway to entry into CRP.”

Producers and landowners enrolled more than 5 million acres into CRP through signups in 2022, building on the acceptance of more than 3.1 million acres in the largest Grassland CRP signup in history. There are currently 23 million acres enrolled in CRP, with 1.9 million set to expire this year. USDA’s Farm Service Agency (FSA) is aiming to reach the 27-million-acre cap statutorily set for fiscal year 2023.

Signed into law in 1985, CRP is one of the largest voluntary private-lands conservation programs in the United States. It was originally intended to primarily control soil erosion and potentially stabilize commodity prices by taking marginal lands out of production. The program has evolved over the years, providing many conservation and economic benefits. **Landowners and producers interested in CRP should contact their local USDA Service Center to learn more or to apply for the program before their deadlines.**

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As a cooperator of NRCS, SWCD must provide reasonable accommodations to USDA customers with disabilities, where appropriate. Individuals requiring reasonable accommodation for any NRCS or SWCD programs or services should contact Carzella Pritchett, Illinois NRCS' Disability Emphasis Program Manager, at (217) 353-6651 directly. Determinations on requests for reasonable accommodation will be made on a case-by-case basis. USDA-NRCS/SWCD are an equal opportunity employer and provider.

Coles County SWCD

2023 Native Plant Sale

| | Common Name | Scientific Name | Bloom Time | Color | Height | Soil Moisture |
|---|--|---|-------------|---------------|--------|---------------|
| # | species availability subject to nursery supply | | | | | Dry↔Mesic↔Wet |
| | Aster, Heath | <i>Symphotrichum ericoides</i> | Aug-Oct | White | 1'-3' | D, M |
| | Black-Eyed Susan | <i>Rudbeckia hirta</i> | July-Sept | Yellow-Orange | 1-3' | D, M, W |
| | *~Blue Flag Iris | <i>Iris virginica shrevei</i> | June | Blue w/Yellow | 2-3' | W |
| | *~Cardinal Flower | <i>Lobelia cardinalis</i> | July-Sept. | Red | 2-4' | W |
| | Coneflower, Pale Purple | <i>Echinacea pallida</i> | May-July | Lavender | 2-3' | D, M |
| | ~ Coreopsis, Prairie | <i>Coreopsis palmata</i> | June-July | Yellow | 1-3' | D, M |
| | ~ Jacob's Ladder | <i>Polemonium reptans</i> | April-May | Blue | 1-2' | M |
| | ~ Joe Pyeweed, Sweet/Purple | <i>Eutrochium purpureum</i> | July-Sept | Pink | 3'-6' | M |
| | Little Bluestem | <i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i> | July-Oct | N/A | 2-3' | D, M |
| | *~Marsh Marigold | <i>Caltha palustris</i> | April-June | Yellow | 2' | W |
| | Milkweed, Butterfly | <i>Asclepias tuberosa</i> | June-Aug. | Orange | 2-3' | D, M |
| | * Milkweed, Marsh/Rose | <i>Asclepias incarnata</i> | July-Aug. | Deep pink | 3-4' | W |
| | Milkweed, Prairie | <i>Asclepias sullivanti</i> | July-Aug. | Pink | 3' | M, W |
| | *~Monkey Flower, Allegheny | <i>Mimulus ringens</i> | June-Sept. | Purple | 2-3' | M, W |
| | ~ New Jersey Tea | <i>Ceanothus americanus</i> | June-July | White | 2-3' | D, M |
| | Prairie Violet | <i>Viola pedatifida</i> | April-June | Violet | 6" | D, M |
| | Pussytoes, Field | <i>Antennaria neglecta</i> | April-June | White | 4" | D, M |
| | * Rush, 3-Square/Chairmaker's | <i>Schoenoplectus pungens</i> | Jun-Oct | N/A | 4' | W |
| | ~ Spiderwort, Ohio | <i>Tradescantia ohiensis</i> | May-July | Blue | 2-3' | D, M |
| | Vervain, Hoary/Hairy | <i>Verbena stricta</i> | June-Sept | Dark Blue | 2-3' | D, M |
| | ~ Wild Bergamot | <i>Monarda fistulosa</i> | July-August | Lilac | 2-3' | D, M |
| | X \$2.50 = \$ | ~tolerates partial shade *great for rain gardens, wetlands, and pond edges | | | | |

Orders Due May 5th, Pick Up: May 17-19th

Return order form with payment to:

Coles County SWCD

6021 Development Drive, Suite 2

Charleston, IL 61920

Stop by the office or visit us online for pictures of each species, wildlife benefits, and growing tips!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Phone : _____

Email: _____

Please remind me prior to pick up: Phone Email

For Office Use: Date Paid: _____ **Amount:** _____ **Check#/Cash:** _____

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Forestry Workshop
 Saturday • April 22nd • Noon
 (Location TBA)

Topics include chainsaw safety, tree ID, timber-stand improvement, forestry management plans, and more!

Free! Registration required.
 217-345-3901 ext 112

Hosted by Lincoln Heritage RC&D and Partners

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