



# Conservation News

## Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District

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Volume 65 Issue 2

### Landscaping with native plants increases biodiversity

Biodiversity commonly refers to the distribution and abundance of plant and animal species within an ecosystem (US Forest Service 1989).

Biodiversity provisions us with foods and materials, it helps regulate natural phenomena such as the water cycle, it inspires cultures to create art, and it supports vast ecosystems. In other words, biodiversity allows us to live healthy, happy, and productive lives.

Unfortunately, we're abusing this natural support system. As of 2009 in the US alone, more than 3,400 species of alien plants have invaded over 200 million acres. Over 40 million acres has been planted to lawns. Up to 33,000 species of plants and animals are now imperiled – too rare to perform their role in their ecosystem. One-third of our nation's birds are endangered. We directly threaten biodiversity through habitat loss, spread of non-native species and diseases, and over-harvest. We also indirectly threaten biodiversity through pollution and climate change.



You can play a part in protecting the biodiversity of your local community by creating backyard wildlife habitat that provides food, water, and shelter. The core of your backyard habitat should be native plants. If you have enough space, native trees and shrubs are great! For smaller yards or even apartment patios, native grasses and flowers can provide food and habitat for birds, pollinating insects such as bees and butterflies, and more!

The Coles Co. SWCD is selling a large variety of native plants through May 2nd that can be used to create a biodiverse backyard habitat. Design help and other resources may also be available. Give us a call!

### Upcoming Events:

#### April:

8th—Board Meeting

#### May:

2nd— Native Plant Sale Orders Due  
13th — Board Meeting  
14th-16th— Native Plant Sale Pickup  
26th—Memorial Day (Office Closed)

#### June:

10th— Board Meeting  
19th—Juneteenth (Office Closed)

### Charleston Field Office Staff and Directors

#### Coles Co. SWCD Board of Directors

**Bill Janes:** Chairman  
**Justin Thomas:** Vice Chairman  
**Todd Easton:** Secretary/Treasurer  
**J.C. Doty**  
**Brian Davis**

#### Coles Co. SWCD Employees

**Kellie Diveley**  
Administrative Assistant  
**Misti Neal Lewis**  
Education Coordinator  
**Malina Przygoda**  
Resource Conservationist

#### NRCS Employees

**Andy Brantner:** District Conservationist  
**Stephen Head:** Soil Conservationist

#### IDOA Employees

**Shannon Kuffel:** Conservation Planner

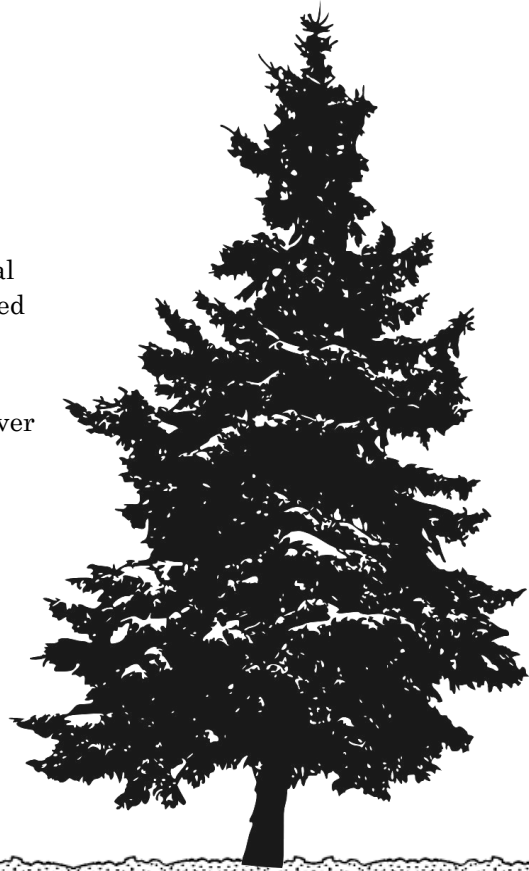
As a cooperator of NRCS, SWCD must provide reasonable accommodations to USDA customers with disabilities, where appropriate. Individuals requiring reasonable accommodation for any NRCS or SWCD programs or services should contact Carzella Pritchett, Illinois NRCS' Disability Emphasis Program Manager, 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.

## Education Update

We have been going extremely strong this year and we are making our presence known in most of the elementary schools in Coles County.

We have had lessons in second grade classrooms every month starting with pumpkins in October and ending with trees this April. Lessons have been focused on many different agricultural topics ranging from wheat to pork, the students enjoy a story tied to a lesson within a 45-minute timeframe.

We have also concluded our popular Arbor Day tree giveaway with Coles County Third graders, and we were able to donate over 400 trees to area students. A great big thank you to everyone that donated for that program. We absolutely could not do this without you!



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## Election Results



Thank you to everyone who voted for our Board of Directors. During our election, a new board member was voted in, Brian Davis. Below is a list of our current Board of Directors:

- **Bill Janes:** Chairman
- **Justin Thomas:** Vice Chairman
- **Todd Easton:** Secretary/Treasurer
- **J.C. Doty**
- **Brian Davis**

## New Staff on the CCSW Team

We have two new staff members joining CCSWCD. Please welcome our new Administrative Coordinator, Kellie Diveley, and our new Resource Conservationist, Malina Przygoda

### Kellie Diveley– Administrative Coordinator

Kellie was born and raised in Florida, and moved to Illinois some time ago from Georgia. Her and her husband, Marc, along with their ten year old twins live just 7 miles north of the SWCD office . Together they have ten children, and eleven grandchildren. Her family is her pride and joy. She enjoys spending time with them, and loves the outdoors. Kellie has a degree in Early Childhood education, and is a certified fitness instructor, but she is excited to learn all about the world of agriculture!

### Malina Przygoda– Resource Conservationist

Malina grew up in Charleston and attended Eastern Illinois University, where she received her Bachelors in Environmental Biology. She spent her first years out of college as the Volunteer and Community Engagement Coordinator for The Douglas-Hart Foundation. In her free time, she enjoys gardening, crafting, canoeing, and hiking. She looks forward to meeting everyone and working towards a better future together.



Przygoda (left) and Diveley (right)  
during tree wrapping

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FIELD TILE DESIGN AND INSTALLATION

# Coles County SWCD

## 2025 Native Plant Sale

| # | Common Name<br><small>(species availability subject to nursery supply)</small> | Scientific Name   | Height | Bloom Color and Time |     |     |     |     |     |     | Soil Moisture<br><small>Dry↔Mesic↔Wet</small> |
|---|--|---|--------|----------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|---|
|   |  |   |        | Apr                  | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct |   |
|   | *Sweet Flag  | <i>Acorus americanus</i>  | 1'-3'  |                      |     |     |     |     |     |     | W   |
|   | ~Leadplant   | <i>Amorpha canescens</i>  | 2'-3'  |                      |     |     |     |     |     |     | D, M  |
|   | ~Red/Wild Columbine  | <i>Aquilegia canadensis</i>   | 2-3'   |                      |     |     |     |     |     |     | D, M  |
|   | Prairie Milkweed   | <i>Asclepias sullivanti</i>   | 3'     |                      |     |     |     |     |     |     | M, W  |
|   | Butterfly Milkweed   | <i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>   | 2-3'   |                      |     |     |     |     |     |     | D, M  |
|   | White Wild Indigo  | <i>Baptisia alba</i>  | 2'-4'  |                      |     |     |     |     |     |     | M, D  |
|   | ~Bottle Gentian  | <i>Gentiana andrewsii</i>   | 18"-2' |                      |     |     |     |     |     |     | M, W  |
|   | ~*Blue Flag Iris   | <i>Iris virginica shrevei</i>   | 2-3'   |                      |     |     |     |     |     |     | M, W  |
|   | Prairie Blazing Star   | <i>Liatris pycnostachya</i>   | 2-5'   |                      |     |     |     |     |     |     | D, M, W                                       |
|   | ~*Cardinal Flower  | <i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>   | 2-4'   |                      |     |     |     |     |     |     | W   |
|   | ~Prairie Sundrop   | <i>Oenothera pilosella</i>  | 2'     |                      |     |     |     |     |     |     | M   |
|   | Wild Quinine   | <i>Parthenium integrifolium</i>   | 2-3'   |                      |     |     |     |     |     |     | D, M  |
|   | ~Hairy Beardtongue   | <i>Penstemon hirsutus</i>   | 1-2'   |                      |     |     |     |     |     |     | D, M  |
|   | ~Jacob's Ladder  | <i>Polemonium reptans</i>   | 1-2'   |                      |     |     |     |     |     |     | M   |
|   | ~Yellow Coneflower   | <i>Ratibida pinnata</i>   | 3-5'   |                      |     |     |     |     |     |     | D, M, W                                       |
|   | ~Black-Eyed Susan  | <i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>  | 1-3'   |                      |     |     |     |     |     |     | D, M, W                                       |
|   | Little Bluestem  | <i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>  | 2-3'   |                      |     |     |     |     |     |     | D, M  |
|   | *Three Square/ Chairmaker's Rush   | <i>Schoenoplectus pungens</i>   | 4'     |                      |     |     |     |     |     |     | W, M  |
|   | Royal Catchfly   | <i>Silene regia</i>   | 2-3.5' |                      |     |     |     |     |     |     | D, M  |
|   | Zig-Zag Goldenrod  | <i>Solidago flexicaulis</i>   | 1-3'   |                      |     |     |     |     |     |     | M, W  |
|   | Prairie Dropseed   | <i>Sporobolus heterolepis</i>   | 2'-3'  |                      |     |     |     |     |     |     | D, M  |
|   | Aromatic Aster   | <i>Symphyotrichum oblongifolium</i>   | 1-2'   |                      |     |     |     |     |     |     | D   |
|   | ~Culver's Root   | <i>Veronicastrum virginicum</i>   | 3-5'   |                      |     |     |     |     |     |     | M, W  |
|   | x \$3 = \$   | ~tolerates partial shade      *great for rain gardens, wetlands, and pond edges |        |                      |     |     |     |     |     |     |   |

Orders Due May 2nd, Pick Up: May 14-16th

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Return order form with payment to:

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Coles County SWCD

City: \_\_\_\_\_

6021 Development Drive, Suite 2

Phone : \_\_\_\_\_

Charleston, IL 61920

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**For Office Use: Date Rec'd:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Check#/Cash:** \_\_\_\_\_ **QB:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Ex:** \_\_\_\_\_



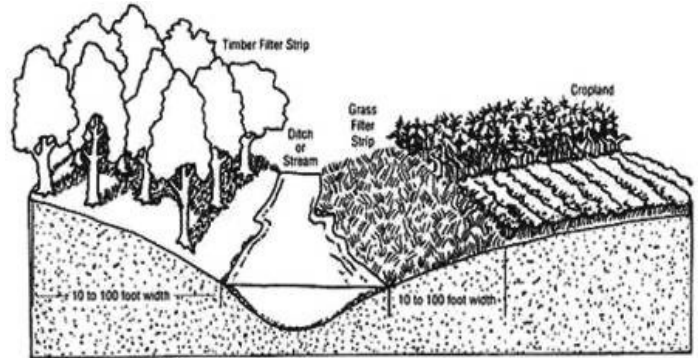
## Filter Strips Benefit Water Quality and Your Wallet

A filter strip is an area of permanent vegetation located between cropland or grazing land and an environmentally sensitive area, such as a stream. Vegetative filter strips can reduce soil erosion, improve water quality, and provide significant habitat for grassland wildlife. They filter runoff by slowing water flow and causing contaminants such as excess nutrients, sediment, and chemicals to get trapped in the vegetation before reaching the environmentally sensitive area. Accumulated nutrients and chemicals are utilized by the vegetation rather than entering the water supply. Filtered water then enters the water bodies.

The Illinois Vegetative Filter Strip Assessment Law provides tax incentives for the development of filter strips for the primary reason of reducing soil erosion. Filter strips **do not have to be enrolled in other SWCD or USDA programs** to qualify for the tax incentives, but the vegetative filter strips must meet NRCS standards and specifications to be assessed at a reduced rate. SWCDs have the authority in certifying that existing vegetative filter meet requirements.

### Do you have an existing filter strip on your property?

Landowners with fully established filter strips on their land need to complete certification to qualify for the property tax reduction. If interested in applying for the property tax reduction on filter strips, stop by the Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District to fill out the necessary paperwork. In order to complete the forms, the property tax identification number for each filter strip area is needed. An aerial map or FSA farm and tract number of the location is also helpful, but not required. Once eligibility has been determined, it is the landowner's responsibility to file documentation with the office of the Coles County Assessor in Charleston.



### Could your property benefit from adding a filter strip?

If you have a body of water (creek, pond, wetland, etc.) on your property that does not currently have at least 30 feet of dense, permanent vegetation around it, that might be a good spot for a filter strip! If the area is on existing farm ground and meets a few other qualifications, it may be eligible for enrollment in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). In addition to the reduced tax rate already discussed, CRP provides cost-share for installation of the practice and an annual payment for acreage enrolled in the program. Landowners and producers interested in CRP should contact their local USDA Service Center to learn more or to apply for the program. If the land in question doesn't qualify for CRP, some other programs exist as well. Give the SWCD office a call and make an appointment to talk to Lauren for more information.

## Photo Contest Open Until May 9th

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. Entries must be received by May 9th 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 up to 18 years of age, which 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  
May 1st!**

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](mailto:info@colescountyswcd.org)





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