



Conservation News

Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District

6021 Development Drive, Suite 2, Charleston, IL 61920

Phone: (217) 345-3901 ext. 3 Email: info@colescountyswcd.org

<http://www.colescountyswcd.org> facebook.com/ColesCountySWCD

Volume 66 Issue 1

Coles County SWCD's 2025 Conservationist of the Year: Mike Gass

Coles County Soil and Water's 2025 Conservationist of the Year is Mike Gass. Mike has been an active farmer with Soil and Water and NRCS for the last few years.

He is a member of our Coles County FLASH group, which connects local farmers interested in improving their soil health, participates in EQUIP and CSP no-till and cover crop programs, our free cover crop seed programs, and practices regenerative grazing. We are happy to see the passion Mike brings to soil health and are excited for what is to come!

Gass was presented with his award at the SWCD's annual holiday party and award ceremony in December. Pictured here (left to right) Todd Easton (Board member/treasurer), Brian Davis (Board Member), Mike Gass, and JC Doty (Board Member)



The object of this award is to provide recognition to an outstanding conservationist in the Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District that exemplifies Total Resource Management. Recipients are selected based on their use of best management practices, implementation of new and innovative technologies, demonstrations of commitment to conservation and stewardship, participation in educational programs and community involvement, and leadership in community, government, and nonprofit or grassroots groups to further their work.



This newsletter has order forms for our Fish, Tree, and Plant Sales!

Upcoming Events:

January:

13th—Board Meeting
19th—MLK Day (Office Closed)
20th—FLASH Group Meeting

February:

3rd —SWCD Board Election
10th—Board Meeting
16th—Presidents' Day (Office Closed)

March:

6th— Tree and Fish Sale Orders Due
10th—Board Meeting
27th— Plant Sale Orders Due

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 & Education Coordinator
Malina Przygoda
Resource Conservationist

NRCS Employees

Andy Brantner: District Conservationist
Stephen Head: Soil Conservationist
IDOA Employees
Shannon Kuffel: Conservation Planner

As a cooperater 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.

Sponsors Sought for Third Grade Arbor Day Program

Although it may not feel like spring outside, we are anticipating warmer weather and that means gearing up to teach Coles County's third graders all about trees this Arbor Day! Every third grade classroom that we visit will be presented with the history of Arbor Day, a discussion of the importance of trees, and each student will take home their very own white pine seedling.

The SWCD is seeking donations to help provide the students with their trees. Each tree costs about \$3 and we would like every third grader in Coles County to receive a tree. Will you help us meet our goal? Here's an example of the impact of your gift.

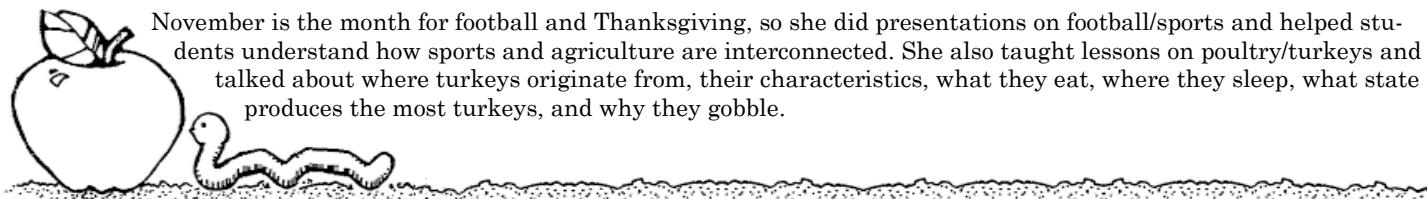
- \$75 will purchase trees for one classroom
- \$450 will purchase trees for one school
- \$1400 will purchase trees for all Coles County 3rd graders

Please mail donations to Coles County SWCD, 6021 Development Drive Suite 2, Charleston, IL 61920.

Education Update

Our Administrative Coordinator, Kellie Diveley has been very busy since taking on her new role as the Education Coordinator. In the months of October and November she has done presentations in six different programs and schools in Coles County impacting a total of 967 students and 37 educators!

Illinois is the #1 state for growing pumpkins in the world! In October Kellie helped students learn about our state's legacy all while having some fun! Between an educational craft, reading the Pumpkin Ag Mag along with a worksheet, listening to the story of Pumpkin Jack, and a pumpkin trivia game that included tossing a blowup pumpkin around the room, students learned all about the lifecycle of a pumpkin and that there's more to pumpkins than meets the eye!



November is the month for football and Thanksgiving, so she did presentations on football/sports and helped students understand how sports and agriculture are interconnected. She also taught lessons on poultry/turkeys and talked about where turkeys originate from, their characteristics, what they eat, where they sleep, what state produces the most turkeys, and why they gobble.



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CHARLESTON, IL - 1475 18th St

217-345-8030 • Open 7AM - 9PM

Visit us at [RuralKing.com!](http://RuralKing.com)

Notice of Election of Directors



To All Owners and Occupiers of Lands Lying Within the Boundaries of Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District: Notice is hereby given that an election will be held on the 3rd day of February, 2026 from 7:30am to 4pm at 6021 Development Drive, Ste. 2, Charleston, IL 61920. Three (3) Directors will be elected to serve the Coles County Soil and Water Conservation District of the State of Illinois. All persons, firms or corporations who hold legal title or are in legal possession of any land lying within the boundaries of the said district are eligible to vote at said election, whether as lessee, renter, tenant or otherwise. Only such persons, firms, or corporations are eligible to vote.

FLASH Group Meeting

Jan. 20th, 2026, 9 a.m. at 6021 Development Drive, Charleston, IL. 61920

Are you a farmer interested in bettering your soil health? Coles County Soil and Water, partnered with American Farmland Trust, is hosting a FLASH (Farmer Lead Advances in Soil Health) meeting. This group is a network of local farmers who are looking to better their fields and their community. The group can help provide mentoring, information sharing, and programs that better your soil health. Although the main focus is around the Lake Mattoon and Lake Paradise area, all are welcome!

In 2025, the FLASH group hosted a cover crop field day and helped facilitate American Farmland Trust's Batch-and-Grow Cover Crop program. This meeting is to discuss what 2026 will look like, including meetings and programs.

CHRIS OVERTON EXCAVATING

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CHRIS: 217-273-0411 GRIFFIN: 217-254-4109



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6021 Development Drive, Suite 2
Charleston, IL 61920
www.colescountyswcd.org

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**Interested in sponsoring the
Conservation News? Our circulation
is over 1,750 readers per quarter!**

To inquire about becoming a sponsor,
please contact our office at
(217) 345-3901 ext. 3 or email
info@colescountyswcd.org

This space available!



People...Products...Knowledge...



3559 E Co Rd 1000 N Mattoon, IL 217-234-2726

Coles County SWCD Spring 2026 Fish Sale

Return order form with payment to: Coles County SWCD, 6021 Development Drive, Suite 2, Charleston, IL 61920

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____
 Phone Number: _____
 Email: _____

Save a tree! I would like to receive the newsletter via email.

Important Dates:

Fish Orders Due: Friday, March 6th
 Fish Pick Up: April 1st at 11am
 at Coles County SWCD Office

Please remind me prior to pick up:

Phone Email

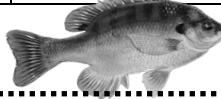
Fish Species	Size	Price	Quantity	Subtotal
Channel Catfish	4-6"	\$1.50 each		\$
	6-8"	\$1.75 each		\$
Largemouth Bass	3-4"	\$2.25 each		\$
Bluegill	1-2"	\$1.00 each		\$
	3-5"	\$1.50 each		\$
Hybrid Bluegill	1-2"	\$1.00 each		\$
	3-5"	\$1.50 each		\$
Red Ear Sunfish	2-4"	\$1.75 each		\$
Black Crappie	3-4"	\$1.75 each		\$
Fathead Minnows	1-3"	\$12.00 per lb.		\$
<hr/>				
Triploid Grass Carp	8-11"	\$13.00 each		\$
<hr/>				
(See below)				
		Total		\$

Note: Please bring containers (Rubbermaid totes work well) to transport your bagged fish to your pond.

TABLE MUST BE COMPLETED FOR ALL GRASS CARP ORDERS:

County	Township	Range	Section	Pond Size (Surface Acres)	Water Name	# of Fish
Ex: Coles	T11N	R9E	16	12 ac.	Pond	4

New pond? Suggested stocking rates:



Note: If you don't know the township, range, and section please write the pond's GPS coordinates below or give us a call!

Largemouth Bass: 30-50 per acre

Bluegill: 150-250 per acre

Redear Sunfish: 200-250 per acre

Fathead minnows: 4-10lbs per acre

Channel Catfish: 25-100 per acre

Call our office or the
IDNR fisheries
biologist for
restocking guidelines!

Recommendations are for new ponds 1/2 acre or more

For Office Use: Date Rec'd: _____

Check#/Cash: _____

QB: _____

Ex: _____

Coles County SWCD Spring 2026 Tree Sale

Return order form with payment to: Coles County SWCD, 6021 Development Drive, Suite 2, Charleston, IL 61920

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____
 Phone Number: _____
 Email: _____

Save a tree! I would like to receive the newsletter via email.

Important Dates:

Tree Orders Due: Friday, March 6th
 Tree Sale Pick Up: April 10th
 8:00am to 4:30pm at Coles Co SWCD Office

Please remind me prior to pick up:

Phone Email

	Size / Age	Price Per Bundle	Total	
Conifers	Sold in bundles of 5 trees		# of bundles	Price
Eastern White Pine <i>Pinus strobus</i>	16-24" 2-2 seedlings	\$30/bundle		\$
Norway Spruce <i>Picea abies</i>	18-30" 2-2 seedlings	\$30/bundle		\$
<u>Note:</u> The conifers are larger this year and in bundles of five. Please contact us if you need larger quantities. All other bundles are similar to last year.				
Deciduous Broadleaves	Sold in bundles of 5 trees		# of bundles	Price
Kentucky Coffee <i>Gymnocladus dioicus</i>	12-18" 2-0 seedlings	\$20/bundle		\$
River Birch <i>Betula nigra</i>	12-18" 1-0 seedlings	\$20/bundle		\$
Musclewood (Hornbeam) <i>Carpinus caroliniana</i>	12-18" 1-0 seedlings	\$20/bundle		\$
Bur Oak <i>Quercus macrocarpa</i>	12-18" 1-0, 2-0 seedlings	\$20/bundle		\$
Shrubs	Sold in bundles of 5 shrubs		# of bundles	Price
Highbush Cranberry <i>Viburnum trilobum</i>	12-18" 1-0 seedlings	\$20/bundle		\$
New Jersey Tea <i>Ceanothus americanus</i>	12-18" 1-0 seedlings	\$20/bundle		\$
Mixed Species Theme Packs	Sold in assorted bundles of 10		# of bundles	Price
Native Wildlife Pack	6-12"	\$35/bundle		\$
2 Swamp White Oak, 2 American Hazelnut, 2 Ninebark, 2 American Plum, 2 Red Osier Dogwood (Mix of trees and shrubs!)				
Native Wild Berry Pack	6-12"	\$35/bundle		\$
3 Elderberry, 2 Allegheny Serviceberry, 3 Native Flowering Raspberry, 2 Red Mulberry (Mix of trees and shrubs!)				
Guards				
Tree Guard <i>The 4" diameter tube speeds photosynthesis by trapping moisture, thereby raising relative humidity and ambient temperature inside the tube.</i> <i>It also protects the tree from animals, wind desiccation, small rodents, and insects. Includes a 48-inch wood stake.</i> <i>Note: Tubes are recommended for deciduous trees only.</i>		\$4 Each		\$
			Total	\$

Disclaimer: "These plants are for conservation purposes only and shall not be used as ornamentals or for landscaping." All orders subject to nursery availability. Trees/shrubs will arrive alive. There is no warranty or guarantee of survival after delivery.

For Office Use: Date Rec'd: _____ Check#/Cash: _____ QB: _____ Ex: _____

Coles County SWCD

2026 Native Plant Sale

Common Name		Scientific Name	Height	Bloom Color and Time							Benefits	Soil Moisture	
#	(species availability subject to nursery supply)			Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct		Dry ↔ Wet	
	Butterfly Milkweed	<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	2-3'			Orange	Orange	Orange			 	D, M	
	Prairie Milkweed	<i>Asclepias sullivantii</i>	2-3'				Pink	Pink			 	M, W	
	Red/Wild Columbine	<i>Aquilegia canadensis</i>	3-5'		Red	Red					  	D, M	
	Harebell	<i>Campanulastrum rotundifolia</i>	1-2'			Purple	Purple	Purple			 	D	
	Prairie Coreopsis	<i>Coreopsis palmata</i>	1-3'			Yellow	Yellow				  	D, M	
	Pale Purple Coneflower	<i>Echinacea pallida</i>	2-3'			Purple					  	D, M	
	Joe Pye Weed	<i>Eutrochium maculatum</i>	4-6'			Pink	Pink	Pink			   	M, W	
	Swamp Rose Mallow	<i>Hibiscus moscheutos</i>	5'			Pink	Pink	Pink			 	M, W	
	Prairie Blazing Star	<i>Liatris pycnostachya</i>	2-5'			Purple	Purple	Purple			 	M, W	
	Cardinal Flower	<i>Lobelia cardinalis</i>	2-4'			Red	Red	Red			   	W	
	Wild Bergamot	<i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	2-3'			Purple	Purple	Purple			 	D, M	
	Foxglove Beardtongue	<i>Penstemon digitalis</i>	2-3'		Stippled	Stippled					  	D, M	
	Jacob's Ladder	<i>Polemonium reptans</i>	1-2'	Blue							  	M	
	Black-Eyed Susan	<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	1-3'			Yellow	Yellow	Yellow			  	D, M, W	
	Royal Catchfly	<i>Silene regia</i>	2-4'			Red	Red	Red				D, M	
	Aromatic Aster	<i>Sympphyotrichum oblongifolium</i>	1-2'			Purple	Purple	Purple				D	
	Blue Vervain	<i>Verbena hastata</i>	2-6'			Blue	Blue	Blue			  	M, W	
	Side-Oats Grama	<i>Bouteloua curtipendula</i>	2-3'	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green		 	D, M	
	Little Bluestem	<i>Schizachyrium scoparium</i>	2-3'	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green			D, M	
	Prairie Dropseed	<i>Sporobolus heterolepis</i>	2-3'	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green	Green			D, M	
	x \$3 = \$												

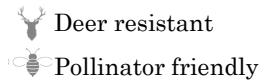
Orders Due: March 27th

Return order form with payment to:

Coles County SWCD

6021 Development Drive, Suite 2

Charleston, IL 61920



 Deer resistant
 Pollinator friendly
 Good for rain gardens, wetlands, and pond edges

Pick Up—Please mark your desired date

New this year—possible pick up at Charleston High School!

- April 15th at the Charleston Highschool Greenhouse
- April 17th at the Soil and Water Office
- Neither of these dates work, please contact me

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

Phone : _____

Email: _____

Please remind me prior to pick up: Phone Email

For Office Use: Date Rec'd: _____ Check#/Cash: _____ QB: _____ Ex: _____

Coles County SWCD Spring Sales

Below are a few options of what you can order, but the forms have more!

Available at the Fish Sale



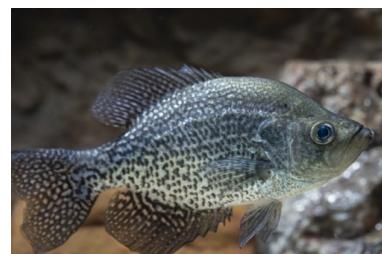
Red Ear Sunfish

Lepomis microlophus



Channel Catfish

Ictalurus punctatus



Black Crappie

Pomoxis nigromaculatus

Forms Due March 6th by 4 pm, Pick up April 1st at 11 am

Available at the Tree and Shrub Sale



New Jersey Tea

Ceanothus americanus



River Birch

Betula nigra



Bur Oak

Quercus macrocarpa

Forms Due March 6th by 4 pm, Pick up April 10th, 8am-4pm

Available at the Native Plant Sale



Harebell
Campanula rotundifolia



Prairie Dropseed
Sporobolus heterolepis



Wild Bergamot
Monarda fistulosa

Forms Due March 27th by 4 pm, Pick up April 15th (at CHS) or 17th (at SWCD)