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Upcoming Events & Important Dates

- March 29th: office closed- Good Friday
- April 4th: Plant presale starts
- April 4th: SWCD board meeting, conference room at 8 AM
- April 5th: Kristen speaking at LWV, Fusion 54 at noon
- April 18th: CISMA meeting, conference room, 4 PM
- April 19th: Bachner Weed Wrangle
- April 24th: Plant presale ends
- May 2nd: SWCD board meeting, conference room at 8 AM
- May 3rd: Sam speaking at the LWV, Fusion 54 at noon
- May 4th: Plant pickup for all those who preordered plants
- May 7th: office closed- Primary Election Day
- May 15th: CGMC meeting, conference room at 10 AM
- May 27th: office closed- Memorial Day
- June 6th: SWCD board meeting, conference room, 8 AM
- June 19th: office closed- Juneteenth
- June 25th: Farmer float trip



CONSERVATION CONNECTION

The Montgomery County Soil & Water Conservation District Newsletter

SPRING 2024 VOL 4 ISSUE 1

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Annual Meeting

At the end of February, we held our 82nd Annual Meeting at Stone Creek Lodge in Crawfordsville. We were grateful to have over 70 attendees and a wonderful meal from our friends at The Juniper Spoon. Dave Peach, Dave Long, and Matt Allen joined us from the radio to conduct live interviews, and Southmont FFA students also attended. We were glad to have Brian Buchanan and Jim Baird visit and are always thankful for the support of Joyce Grimble, our county council representative. We learned about the connection between invertebrates and soil health from our keynote speaker, Stephanie Frischie, Agronomist and Native Plant Materials Specialist at the Xerces Society. We also celebrated our 2023 Conservationist of the Year, Cornerstone Farms & Livestock, and highlighted Cain's Homelike Farms for their Conservation Farmer of the Year win, a statewide award from the Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD). We had a very busy 2023 and we are looking

forward to see what 2024 has in store! We thank you all for your continued support!

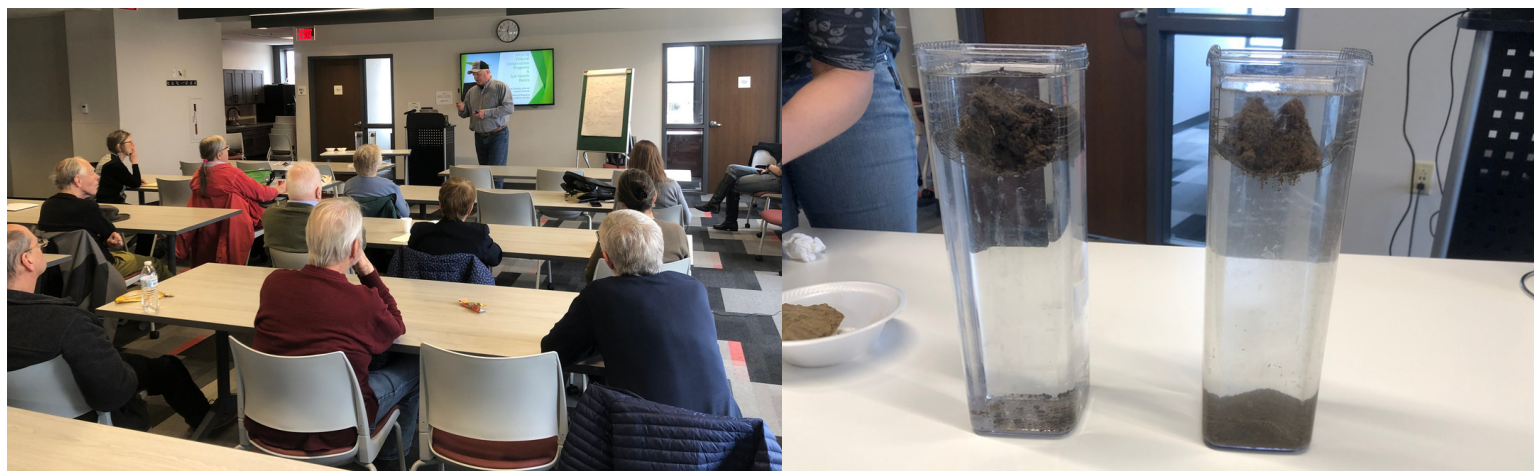
Above: Attendees listen to the keynote speaker during the annual meeting at Stone Creek Lodge.

Left: Jarrod Zachary of Cornerstone Farms & Livestock, LLC received the Montgomery County Conservationist of the Year from District Conservationist, Dave Stanley.



Lunch with the League Series

On March 1st, we started a three-part series with the Montgomery County League of Women Voters. Dave Stanley, District Conservationist, spoke on the structure of the Indiana Conservation Partnership and some basic information on soil health. He did a slake test for attendees, demonstrating the difference in water retention between soil conventionally tilled versus non-tilled soil. We have two talks left in this series, each on the first Friday of the month. On April 5th Kristen Latzke, Conservation Director at the district, will dive into SWCD history, including why districts were created. She will also touch on the importance of water quality. On May 3rd, Sam Lovold, Program Coordinator at the district, will talk about how the public can get involved in SWCD programs. He will focus on our two working groups, the Montgomery County Cooperative Invasive Species Management Area (CISMA) and the urban soil health-focused working group, Community Growers of Montgomery County (CGMC). Both of these groups are open to any Montgomery County resident. Please consider joining us at one or both of the remaining talks in this series! Each presentation will take place on the 3rd floor of Fusion 54 at noon. You are welcome to bring a sack lunch to eat during the presentation. We hope to see you there!



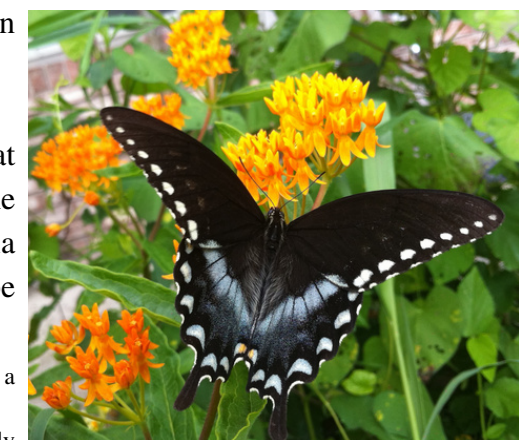
Native Plant Sale

Be on the lookout on our socials for the announcement of our Annual Native Plant Sale! After a year off we are bringing back this event with new offerings! Most pollinators rely on native plants at some point in their life cycle and without them we wouldn't be able to grow the plants we need to keep the world going. By using native North American plants in your yard you not only bring beauty to it but provide needed resources for insects and birds to flourish. We will have a variety of species available that will provide visual appeal throughout the summer and fall. We have selected some species that fill the aesthetic role of many popular plants that are now considered invasive and detrimental to our native Montgomery County ecosystems. Red chokeberry with its fiery fall leaves makes a great alternative to burning bush. White meadowsweet is a North American Spirea that has huge white clusters of flowers.



Presale will begin April 4th online and run until April 24th, with pickup at the 4H fairgrounds beef barn on May 4th from 9 am -12 pm. A link to the online store will be available on our website as well as on our social media feeds. There will be no plants available for sale the day of pickup so be sure to get your orders in ahead of time!

Above: An Eastern Tiger Swallowtail drinks nectar from a prairie blazing star.
Below: A Spicebush Swallowtail lands on some Butterfly Weed. Both of these plants will be available to order!



Save the Date! 4th Annual Farmer Float Trip: June 25th



Thank you farmers for your commitment to conservation! Please bring your family and join us for a free canoe trip down Sugar Creek from 8:30 AM to 1:00 PM! Lunch included! RSVP to montcountyswcd@gmail.com or 765-362-0405 extension 3 and provide your name, contact information, and the number of participants. Please note if participants are under the age of 18. We cannot accommodate those under the age of 5 for this event.

Invasive Species Spotlight: Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*)



It is finally Spring so that means you will start seeing signs of life in our natural areas. Invasive species often green up before native species do, making them easy to spot in the Spring. Garlic Mustard was brought from Europe and Asia in the 1800s for herbal and medicinal use. It spreads quickly across the forest floor and can also be found in landscaped areas. Young plants in the first year of growth have rounded leaves and older plants have more of a heart-shaped leaf with serrated edges. They produce white flowers and the leaves do have a garlic odor. To remove, hand pull from the base and bag immediately. It is best to remove before the plant has gone to seed as disturbing the plant will cause seeds to drop. Do not throw in your compost pile! Garlic mustard is edible and makes a delicious pesto! Keep an eye out for this plant along the Sugar Creek Trail this Spring and remove what you see near the path. For questions on invasive species, or a free site visit, contact Sam, at 765-362-0405 extension 121 or programs@montgomerycoswcd.com today!