



# HAMILTON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

ADVANCING SOIL AND WATER SUSTAINABILITY

## Let's Grow! Hamilton County Ag News May 2026

### Message from the Ag Specialist

This newsletter issue is chock full of upcoming programs, workshops, updates, and opportunities! Just like our spring plants, Hamilton County agriculture and food system happenings are sprouting, growing, blossoming, and bearing fruit.

I had the pleasure of joining the Civic Garden Center's GrowFest earlier this month and it was rewarding to see so many people excited about plants and enjoying the beauty, education, and connection offered by Civic Garden Center. At the "Ask the Expert" booth I answered questions, but I also learned just as much from the people I talked with. We all have expertise to contribute and I truly value learning from each other and working in partnership. You will see a number of partner organizations featured in this newsletter because collaborations make programming stronger and expand our reach to the communities we serve.

May your spring be filled with nourishing partnerships, learning opportunities, and new growth.

Nicole Gunderman  
Agriculture Specialist  
Hamilton County Conservation District



GrowFest at Civic Garden Center was a wonderful day of plants, people, and community. Nicole Gunderman, Agriculture Specialist. Photo credit: Erin Sigmund, Civic Garden Center

## Upcoming District Events



**Pasture Management  
Healthy Land & Healthy Horses**  
Saturday, May 30  
8:30 am - 1:00pm

## Greenacres Foundation

Join us for a beginner-level workshop on Equine Grazing for equestrians with any number of horses. Learn from experienced practitioners through a combination of classroom instruction and an interactive pasture walk.

Speakers:

- JT Benitez, OSU Extension, Butler County
- Micalene Villamagna & Leah Bartel, Greenacres Stable Supervisor & Livestock Field Coordinator
- Nicole Gunderman, Hamilton County Conservation District

[Register Here for Pasture Management](#)

## How to Build a Handwashing Station

**Saturday, June 20**

**10:00am-12:00pm**

**Civic Garden Center's CUF Restoration Site, 2724 W. McMicken Ave**

Handwashing reduces the spread of foodborne illnesses, and it begins right in the garden! This program provides step-by-step instructions for making a DIY Handwashing Station using inexpensive materials. Learn what supplies are needed to stock your station and how to site it at your garden, farm, market booth, or roadside stand. We will also provide a brief overview of what the GAP Certification process entails and how to get started if it is something you are considering.



[Register for DIY Handwashing](#)



## Intro to Backyard Beekeeping

**Saturday, June 27**

**10:00am - 12:00pm**

**Civic Garden Center's CUF Restoration Site, 2724 W. McMicken Ave**

Curious about backyard beekeeping? This program gives a basic introduction to what it takes to keep honeybees, helping you make an educated decision to either go for it – and learn more – or perhaps decide it isn't the right time or project for you. Either way,



you'll learn a lot about honeybees, their fascinating life cycle, the important role they play as pollinators, and what possible next steps you can take in your beekeeping journey.

**Register for Intro to Beekeeping**



## Warm Season Grasses for Pasture and Hay at Bahr Farm

**Tuesday, July 28**

**6:00 - 8:00pm**

**969 W. North Bend Rd**

Join us at Cardinal Land Conservancy's Bahr Farm in College Hill for a summer evening program on warm season grass pastures and hay production. Bahr Farm has successfully installed warm season grass hay fields and pollinator-friendly pasture within its 32-acre site. Learn from Farm Manager Nick Hartley about the Farm's experience and from Jason Jones of Pheasants Forever on grass ecology, grazing systems, and support of wildlife. Nick will do a hay sampling demonstration and share data on their nutritional analysis. We will end with a pasture walk to identify warm season grasses and see the Farm's cattle herd. Free, but registration is required.



**Register for Warm Season Grass Program**



## Cover Crops for Small Gardens & Raised Beds

Wednesday, July 15

6:00-7:30pm

HCCD Training Center

2710 E. Kemper Rd.

Cover crops aren't just for big crop fields! Learn the benefits of using cover crops in small garden systems. Cover crops keep soil covered and roots in the ground outside the regular growing season and provide benefits to improve soil health, support beneficial pollinators, and help to manage weeds. This class and our accompanying July Cover Crop Seed Sale will get you ready to integrate these helpful plants in your garden.

**Register for Cover Crops for Small Gardens**

Look for our Cover Crop Seed Sale to open online on July 1st with seed pickup in August!

## Partner Programs

If you would like us to include your upcoming events in this bi-monthly newsletter, please email pertinent information and a link to:

[nicole.gunderman@hamiltoncountyohio.gov](mailto:nicole.gunderman@hamiltoncountyohio.gov)

### Education Programs:

May 16: [Growing Mushrooms](#), Richlife Farm @ Cincy Nature Center

May 16: [May Farm Fest](#), Gorman Heritage Farm

May 20: [Health Impacts of Farming Practices](#), Greenacres Foundation

May 29: [Tour of Turner Farm](#) with SWOEFFA (email to register)

May 30: [Equine Pasture Management](#), Greenacres Foundation

June 9: [Compost Basics](#), Civic Garden Center

June 12: [Midwest Regional Sustainability Summit](#), Green Umbrella

June 16: [Companion Planting](#), Civic Garden Center

June 20: [Garden Tour](#), Greenacres Foundation

June 20: [DIY Handwashing Station](#), Civic Garden Center

June 27: [Intro to Beekeeping](#), Civic Garden Center



**May 16th from 9am-3pm at Gorman Heritage Farm.** Enjoy a family-friendly day full of hands-on fun at the Farm with animal encounters, touch-a-tractor/truck, face painting, dance party, hay rides, and more!

Gorman Heritage Farm cultivates a healthy community through farm-based education and experiences about food, sustainable agriculture, and the natural world.

### May Farm Fest Registration

### OSU Master Gardener Volunteer Training Program

This course provides intensive training in horticulture to Hamilton County residents who then volunteer their time assisting with educational programs and activities. Volunteers are not required to have gardening skills or knowledge, but should have a passion for gardening and sharing this knowledge with others. Master Gardeners serve residents by volunteering at one of more than 30 approved sites in Hamilton County. The course runs from August 27 to December 3 and combines self-study online modules with weekly virtual or in-person sessions with industry experts. For more information about the statewide program go [HERE](#).

To register in Hamilton County, email Terri Byczkowski at [byczkowski.5@osu.edu](mailto:byczkowski.5@osu.edu)



## Educational Resources

**Clermont County Field Day**  
**June 18, 6-9pm**  
**Hatfields Farm**

### **1174 State Route 222, Bethel, OH**

Join the Clermont County Soil and Water Conservation District for a row cropping field day. Discussion will include relay cropping, equipment alterations, and other conservation practices implemented. RSVP by Monday, June 15 by calling or emailing Amanda Best [abest@clermontcountyohio.gov](mailto:abest@clermontcountyohio.gov), 513-260-9116

### **Butler County Pasture Walk**

**July 15, 5-8pm**

**Reserve Run Family Farm**

**2850 Lanes Mill Rd, Oxford, OH**

Join the Butler County Soil and Water Conservation District for a pasture walk. Hear from grazing experts on forage selection, proper rotations, and other current topics like virtual fencing. Please bring a comfortable pair of walking shoes and a lawn chair. Light refreshments will be provided. RSVP by Wednesday, July 10 by calling 513-785-6663.

### **EcoFarm & Food Forestry Certificate Program**

**Antioch College**

**Yellow Springs, Ohio**

**Weekends in July**

You are invited to a three-weekend immersion in regenerative agriculture, soil health, specialty crops, native plants, and pollinators at the Antioch College Farm. Guided by Farm Manager Bruce Linebaugh and a network of experienced practitioners, you will learn through hands-on experience. Whether you are tending a backyard garden or planning a small farm, this program offers practical skills and connection to a community of growers. Learn more and register [HERE](#).

### **The Grow Down on Soil Health**

**Farmers for Soil Health**

**Ongoing Podcast**

The Grow Down on Soil Health Podcast dives deep into sustainable farming practices designed to enhance both your land and your bottom line. Hear industry experts from all walks of agricultural life, such as regenerative agriculture veterans, agronomists, and soil health researchers, as they share soil health management techniques they've learned along the way. Brought to you by Farmers for Soil Health, a partnership of The Nature Conservancy, Ohio Soybean Council, Ohio Corn, Wheat Growers Association, and Ohio Agribusiness Association, which in addition to the podcast also offers technical assistance to help Ohio corn and soybean producers access funding to grow 65,000 acres of cover crops by 2027. Find out more and listen [HERE](#).

## **Grants & Other Opportunities**

**USDA Grassland Conservation Reserve Program**

**Deadline: May 29**

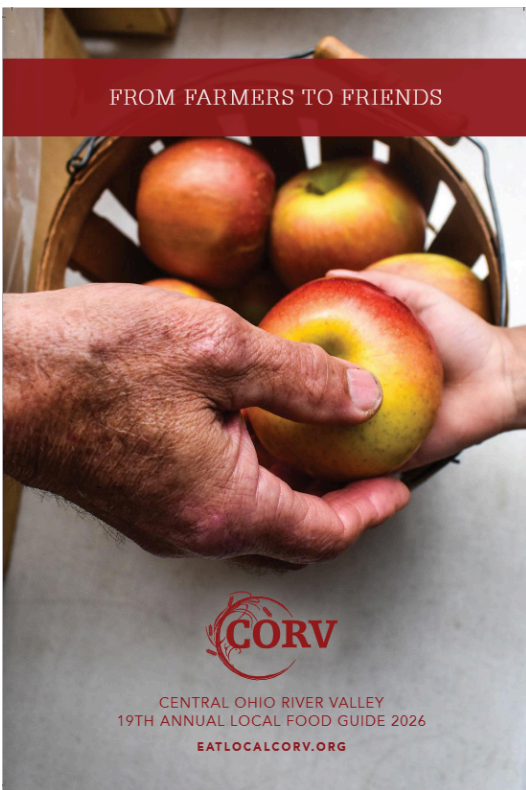
Enrollment for the USDA's Grassland Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is now open. This working lands conservation program allows participants to conserve grasslands while continuing most grazing and haying practices. Contact your local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office in advance of the deadline. Find out more and submit your offer [HERE](#).

## USDA Local Ag Market Program (LAMP)

**Deadline: June 5**

Funding is available through the Local Agriculture Market Program (LAMP) which is intended to help local and regional food entities develop, coordinate, and expand producer to consumer marketing, local and regional food markets, and local food enterprises. LAMP includes the Farmers Market Promotion Program, Local Food Promotion Program, and the Regional Food System Partnerships. Learn more and apply [HERE](#).

## CORV Local Food Guide



The Central Ohio River Valley (CORV) initiative is a grassroots effort to connect community members with local growers and fresh, healthy local food. It aims to promote self-sufficiency, sustainability, and the wise use of resources.

Find the CORV Local Food Guide online, in the May issue of Cincinnati Magazine, and at area Farmer's Markets.

Find the digital guide [HERE](#). Ask for it at your local farmer's market. And check out Page 20 for an article about the Hamilton County Conservation District!

## Hamilton County Conservation District

Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) like us were established in response to the environmental devastation of the Dust Bowl in the 1930s,

with the mission of promoting sustainable land management practices. These districts, which exist in almost every U.S. county, work to conserve and protect local soil, water, and natural resources through education, technical assistance, and community collaboration. In agriculture, SWCDs help farmers and landowners implement practices that prevent erosion, improve water quality, and enhance soil health, supporting long-term sustainability and resilience. Hamilton County presents unique challenges as a mostly urban county, but it also has a rich and vibrant agriculture community.

All District programs and services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, pregnancy, religion, national origin, genetic information, ancestry, age, marital/parental status, political affiliation, military service, disability, or other non-job-related criteria.

### **District Staff**

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Michaela Werling, Soil  
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### **Board of Supervisors**

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