

# CONSERVATION SPOTLIGHT

SPRING 2014

A NEWSLETTER OF THE  
HAMILTON COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT



## Hi there!

It has been a crazy winter this year but, the good news is spring is finally here! We have lots of fun and educational opportunities lined up for you. We have Pond Clinics, Summer Programs for kids, Cover Crop Sale and the Rain Barrel Art Project, just to highlight a few. Due to a extremely wet winter, Hamilton County hillsides will be at high risk for landslides this spring. Make sure you read the article on landslides to be prepared.

We are always looking for feedback from our readers, so write, post, tweet or talk to us on what you think about the articles and tell us what you would like to read about. We hope you enjoy this edition of *Conservation Spotlight*.

## WORM BIN WORKSHOP

NATURE RECYCLES:  
MAKE AND TAKE WORM BIN

\$20 Hamilton Co residents, and teachers;  
\$35 all others.  
May 17; 9:30am - 11:30am @ the District Office

Designed for homes, families and all grade level educators. Learn the essentials about vermicomposting. Using red worms and microorganisms to break down organic matter, you can bury your lunch scraps and harvest vermicompost in 3-4 months. Participants will receive instruction book, worm bin and activities. Families are welcome to attend the workshop. Contact Gwen Roth at the district office for more information.

## Saving Rain For a Sunny Day

AN OHIO RIVER VALLEY RAIN BARREL ART PROJECT

RAIN BARREL ART BENEFIT AUCTION

APRIL 24, 2014 | 5:00 - 8:30 PM

GO GREEN GARDEN  
CINCINNATI ZOO & BOTANICAL GARDEN

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT:



SAVELOCALWATERS.ORG

NATIONAL DRUG  
TAKE-BACK INITIATIVE  
April 26th, 2014

Visit our website or follow us  
on Facebook for locations.



## WE'RE LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD BOARD MEMBERS

Any person 18 years or older and residing in Hamilton County may run for the volunteer office of Board of Supervisors for our District. If you want to have a positive influence on conservation in your county, contact Holly Utrata-Halcomb, District Administrator for more information.

HAMILTON COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
PROGRAMS AND ASSISTANCE  
AGRICULTURE & SOIL FERTILITY | EDUCATION | URBAN STREAMS  
URBAN LAND MANAGEMENT & EARTHWORKS | PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMS  
22 TRIANGLE PARK DR. CINCINNATI OH 45246  
PHONE: 513-772-7645 | FAX 513-772-7656 | WWW.HCSWCD.ORG  
EDITOR: HOLLY UTRATA-HALCOMB | DESIGN: JOHN NELSON

# CELEBRATE WITH US!

## Soil and Water Stewardship Week

To the farmer, soil is where crops grow.

To the engineer, soil is a foundation upon which to build.

To the ecologist, soil supports living things.

To the archaeologist, soil holds clues to past cultures.

To the city dweller, soil nurtures grass and gardens.

To the soil scientist, soil is all of these things.

Soil has been called "the skin of the earth" because it is the thin outermost layer of the Earth's crust. Like our own skin, we can't live without soil. (Source: Soil Science Society of America) Everyone depends on it. Let's celebrate that connection to soil during the 59th Annual Soil and Water Stewardship week April 27 - May 4, 2014.

## Earth Day

Every day is a great day to celebrate the Earth and its fabulous resources. We hope you come and join us during the following events:

Earth Jam at Cincinnati State; Thursday, April 10 11:00a - 1:00p.

Earth Day at Sawyer Point; Saturday, April 19 noon - 5:00p.

Party for the Planet at the Cincinnati Zoo and the Rain Barrel Art Project Auction; Thursday, April 24 6:00p - 8:30p. (Free entry to the Zoo after 5:00p)

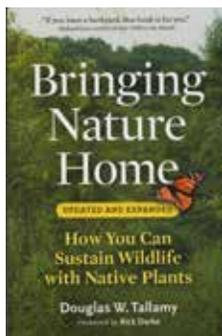
If you can't come celebrate with us, here are some things you can do in your own neighborhood:

- Plant a tree.
  - Use your own bags, not just at the grocery store. Try it next time you go to the mall. You may get a few sideways glances, but you can feel great knowing that you are doing your part.
  - Buy locally produced food whenever possible. Think of all the gas you and the delivery trucks can save.
  - Donate usable items to a friend or charity instead of throwing them away.
  - Make your own environmentally friendly cleaning products.
  - Learn to make your own fertilizer - compost!
  - Make sure you are using the right amount of yard chemicals.
- Have your soil tested. Call the office for a kit.

# BOOKWORM BURROW - BOOK REVIEWS

## BRINGING NATURE HOME BY DOUG TALLAMY

Usually we do books for the kiddos in the B.B., but this month I have one for the big kids; the ones that are so excited about Spring that they already have their gardening tools lined up by the back door, ready to dig, as visions of buzzing pollinators dance in their heads. Before you get busy planting this year, however, I ask you to read *Bringing Nature Home* by Doug Tallamy. Tallamy challenges people to think about what they are planting in their yard with a whole different, completely shocking purpose: to actually benefit...wait for it...nature. Yep, that delicate balance of an ecosystem outside of your window, the one that you and your family love to admire, needs every gardener, landscaper and amateur green thumb to help it thrive. For so many years, the focal point of landscaping our yards was largely planting what would look prettiest, without thinking about the effect of replacing the plants that are native to the area with ones that come from all over the country and beyond. Oftentimes we can thank those types of landscapes for those vicious and persistent invasive species that we continue to fight in our state parks, creeksides and woodlands all throughout Ohio.



Tallamy encourages native plants, those that can sustain the teeny-tinies of our garden, which feed the crawlies, which nourish the native birds and on and on into the intricate balance that even you are part of. If we take away habitat, we take away species, so every suburban and urban gardener's space matters, no matter how small, to wildlife. Tallamy writes in an accessible way, with an appealing blend of humor and knowledge, and you can tell that he writes this book because the subject matters to him. I think he wants us all to realize that it matters to everyone else too.

Grab *Bringing Nature Home* and plant your native garden. Then you can sit back and enjoy the butterflies, bees, birds and beauty of it all, knowing you are playing a part in keeping it that way.

"It is now within the power of individual gardeners to do something that we all dream of doing: making a difference. In this case the 'difference' will be the future of biodiversity, to the plants and animals of North America and the ecosystems that sustain them."

Don't have time to get the book before planting? Check out [bringingnaturehome.net](http://bringingnaturehome.net) for quick tips.

# HCSWCD EDUCATION DEPT. WINS AWARD



Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District was awarded the Conservation Education District of the Year Award by the Ohio Federation of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (OFSWCD). The top three counties nominated for the award included, Hamilton, Medina and Mercer Counties. Representatives from the three counties gave a 5 minute presentation on their programs. After which people attending the OFSWCD Annual Meeting voted on their favorite program.

The results were announced on the following day. Gwen Roth, Education Specialist accepted the award on behalf of the District.

During her presentation she focused on the Caring For Our Watersheds competition organized by the District. Sponsored by Agrium and EECO. This years Caring For Our Watershed finals will take place on May 3.

## UPCOMING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITES

### Summer Library Educational programs

The Soil and Water Conservation District will be presenting education programs at several libraries around the county this summer. Please like us on Facebook or follow us on Twitter to find when we will be in your neighborhood. You will also be able to access the list of programs on our website.

### Dig Deeper Soils Workshop

This workshop includes hands-on activities, technical resources, networking, giveaways & lots of soil information, including guest speaker/soil scientist Matt Deaton from ODNR.

The workshop will focus on the 6th grade Academic Content Standards for Earth & Space Science.

**When:** Thursday, June 12th, 2014 from 9:00a - 3:30p.

**Where:** Scarlet Oaks Campus (tri-county area)

**Cost:** \$20 registration fee, includes teacher resources, snacks, drinks, giveaways, door prizes & a book for the classroom.

**Deadline:** May 30

### For More Information:

Check out our website or call Gwen Roth at the district office.



## REFOREST MIAMI WHITEWATER FOREST



Help reforest the "forest" by pitching in to get more than 1200 trees planted, staked and protected! This project organized by the Great Parks of Hamilton County, is a part of the regional Taking Root campaign to plant two million trees by 2020! This project will focus on installing a tree buffer to reduce erosion and nutrient inputs into Dry Fork Creek.

Supporting organizations will be on hand with displays and to answer any questions you may have about reforestation. A planting demo, lunch and drinks will be provided. This project is made possible in part by a funding provided by event co-sponsor Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District. Volunteers of all ages are welcome to take part in this important reforestation initiative. Volunteers under the age of 14 must be accompanied by an adult. Advance registration and a Great Parks Volunteer Waiver are required. Please register at: <http://greatparks.org/volunteer/one-time-volunteer> or call our office.

**When:** Saturday, April 12, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

**Where:** Miami Whitewater Forest  
(Meet at the Big Sycamore Picnic Shelter)  
9001 Mt. Hope Rd. Crosby Township, OH 45030

# GROW YOU FERTILIZER WITH COVER CROPS

What are cover crops?

A cover crop is a crop that is not harvested but is grown to benefit the soil and/or other plants in a number of ways.

What are the benefits of using cover crops?

- Reduces soil erosion
- Holds minerals in the soil that are lost during the winter

- Suppresses weed growth
- Improves air and water movement in the soil
- Supports microbial life in the soil which helps soil quality
- Cover crops contain inoculant, which is a peat moss carrier for rhizobia bacteria. The bacteria work in conjunction with the plant roots to collect atmospheric nitrogen and "fix" it to the roots

## 2014 SPRING COVER CROP & SOIL TEST KIT SALE

### Fall Cover Crop Seed

This mix includes seven plant species that grow quickly, fix nitrogen, provide organic matter, suppress weeds and is winter killed. The plants include Flax, Phacelia, Tillage Radish, Oats, Austrian Winter Pea, Cow Pea and Pearl Millet. Best time to plant is late August or early September. Inter-planting between row crops works well.

### Crimson Clover

Plant in the spring between rows of vegetable plants as a pathway to limit weeds and add nitrogen to the soil. Mow Clover when seed heads begin to form.

### Soil Testing

Soil test kits are available from the District office year round. If you want to test your soil before the seed pick up dates, come by the office. You may call or visit our website and have a test kit sent to you by mail for an additional \$1.50/kit. Processing time to receive your test results is 1 – 2 weeks.

Hamilton County Landowners may purchase up to two kits/address for \$5.00 ea. Additional soil test kits can be purchased for \$12.00 ea. This is also the rate for out of County residents. Please place your mail orders using the below order form and make checks payable to HCSWCD.

Orders may also be placed online by going to [www.hcswcd.org](http://www.hcswcd.org).

**Deadline for orders: April 24, 2014.**

Orders must be picked up at our office on the following days:

May 12 – 8:00am – 5:00pm

May 14 – 8:00am – 6:30pm

### ORDER FORM

#### Fall Cover

(Plant between Aug. 15 & Oct. 1)

1/2lb	1lb	5lb	10lb	total
x\$4	x\$5	x\$20	x\$30	

#### Crimson Clover

(Plant in the Spring)

1lb	5lb	10lb	total
x\$5	x\$20	x\$30	

#### Soil Test Kit

HC Resident	Non-Resident	total
x\$5	x\$12	

Grand Total	\$
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Name:.....

Phone:.....

Email:.....

Address:.....

.....

.....

Hamilton County Resident?

... Yes ... No

Mail completed forms and checks to:

HCSWCD  
22 Triangle Park Dr.  
Cincinnati, OH 45246

All orders must be prepaid.

Order forms must reach us by April 24.

# TWO CLINICS FOR ALL POND NEEDS

The Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District is sponsoring a Pond Clinic to provide information for current or prospective pond owners regarding issues associated with constructing and maintaining a pond. In addition, the Hamilton County SWCD clinic will also feature a class on water gardens.

The pond clinic will be on Wednesday, June

4. The clinic is to be held at the Sharon Centre at Sharon Woods Park, located at 11450 Lebanon Rd. in Sharonville (45241). The clinic will be from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. For more information, contact our office.

The Butler County Soil and Water Conservation District will also be hosting a pond clinic on Wednesday, April 2. The clinic is to be held at the Izaak Walton League, located at 450 Beissinger Rd. in Hamilton (45013). The clinic will be from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m., and the venues' ponds will be available for fishing from 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. prior to the clinic. For more information, contact the Butler County SWCD at (513) 887-3720.

Experts and speakers will be on hand to discuss and answer questions about pond construction, fish stocking, aquatic weed control and pond aeration.

Door prizes and informational handouts will be available for the attendees to take home. Both clinics are open to the public and are free of charge. We hope to see you there!



## Board of Supervisors

Sam McKinley, Chairman  
Denny Benson, Vice-Chairman  
Scott P. Huber, Secretary  
Steve Johns, Treasurer  
Pam Simmons, Program Chairman

## District Staff

Holly Utrata-Halcomb, Administrator  
Susan Juriga, Administrative Assistant  
John Nelson, Public Relations Specialist  
Sarah Van Frank, Storm Water Coordinator  
Dan Taphorn, Urban Conservationist  
Chey Alberto, Urban Technician  
Steve Eberts, Urban Technician  
Robert Sheets, Geotechnical Engineer  
Gwen Z. Roth, Education Specialist  
Niki Marengo, Education Assistant  
Brian Bohl, Stream Specialist  
Carrie Gibbons, Program Assistant

## NRCS

John Williams, District Conservationist  
William Cook, Soil Conservationist

## SPRING IS LANDSLIDE SEASON

Spring is here. Preceded by recent heavy winter snows, spring rains will saturate overburden soils. Heavy, wet soils and high groundwater quantities, in turn, are conditions susceptible to landslides. If you live on or adjacent to a hillside, particularly above a stream, pay close attention for cracks in structures, pavements or the ground surface that can indicate earth movement and land sliding. See that storm water from downspouts and other drain pipes, pavement runoff, etc., does not outlet directly onto the top of slopes - direct such drainage water away from slopes or pipe it to the bottom of slopes. Maintain healthy, native vegetation on your slope.

District Geotechnical Engineer, Robert E. Sheets, P.E., wrote an excellent landslide primer entitled, "Landslides in Hamilton County". This report can be accessed on our website at <http://www.hcswcd.org/newsletters-and-publication.html>. Another good resource on this website is a brochure supplied by Hillside Trust entitled "Identifying Landslides in the Greater Cincinnati Area - A Landowner's Guide" that includes a variety of information useful in identifying landslides and properly maintaining your hillsides. Please contact us with any questions you may have or to receive a hard copy of either of these documents. Feel free to call our office with any questions.

**Follow us on social media!**

WEBSITE



NEWSLETTER



TWITTER



FACEBOOK



Hamilton County  
Soil & Water  
Conservation District  
22 Triangle Park Dr.  
Cincinnati, OH 45246  
(513) 772-7645  
[www.hcswcd.org](http://www.hcswcd.org)

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

- Board Meeting - April 8, 12PM
- Reforest Miami Whitewater Forest - April 12, 9AM to 4PM
- Rain Barrel Art Project Auction - April 24th, 5PM to 8:30PM
- Last Date for Cover Crop Sale Orders - April 24th
- National Drug Take Back Initiative - April 26th
- Cover Crop Sale Pickup - May 12, 8AM to 5PM
- Board Meeting - May 13, 12PM
- Cover Crop Sale Pickup - May 14, 8AM to 6:30PM
- Worm Bin Workshop - May 17, 9:30AM to 11:30AM
- Pond Clinic - June 4, 6:00PM to 9:00PM

Mission Statement: A public organization committed to assisting the citizens of Hamilton County through education, technical assistance and leadership to be stewards of our soil and water resources.

All District programs are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status or handicap.

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit Organization  
 U.S. Postage  
 PAID  
 Permit No. 3556  
 Cincinnati, OH



Hamilton County Soil and Water  
Conservation District  
22 Triangle Park Drive  
Cincinnati, OH 45246-3411