



MARCH 2021 CONSERVATION UPDATE

Your Source for Conservation News in Washtenaw County



Volunteer for the 2021 Tree Sale!

By Doug Reith, Resource Coordinator

Volunteers have long been the engine driving annual tree and shrub distributions. With volunteer time, hard work and heart, the WCCD has distributed over 7.1 million trees and plants to Washtenaw County residents since 1951! Volunteers have assisted at countless tabling events, workshops, fairs, and served on the WCCD board since our founding in 1948.

Since the sale was canceled last year, and with more folks at home due to the pandemic, we're reaching a record number of plants sold and total orders, so we need your help to make the distribution happen efficiently and safely this spring. We will be taking precautions following local and state health advisements around the COVID-19 virus.

Starting Wednesday, April 21st volunteers will help prepare and set up for the distributions on Friday, April 23rd and Saturday, April 24th. The volunteer shifts are 2 hours each, and involve sorting, counting of plants, packing of orders, and assisting with the orders' customer pick-ups. If you can do one or more shift, please consider signing up now:

[Sign me up!](#)

WCCD Monthly Distributions

Save water and money with Rain Barrels!

By Doug Reith, Resource Coordinator

Every March the weather dances between winter and spring, and inevitably, we'll get plenty of rainy days bringing early blooms. Those rain days also contribute to runoff of pollutants that have accumulated on our driveways and roads. These end up in our drain ways, streams and rivers.

Strategies to prevent runoff include diverting the storm water with a water catchment system. Rain Barrels can be an easy solution and provide many other benefits:

- A rain barrel can save most homeowners about 1,300 gallons of water during the peak summer months which not only protects the environment, but saves you money and energy with decreased demand for treated tap water.
- Lawn and garden watering make up nearly 40% of total household water use during the summer. A rain barrel collects and stores water for periods of drought.
- Rainwater is naturally soft water, devoid of minerals, chlorine, fluoride, and other chemicals. This makes it ideal for watering gardens, flowers, washing windows and cars.
- The [City of Ann Arbor offers credits toward City resident's stormwater rate bills](#) for reducing the impervious areas of their residential property.



Want to take advantage of these benefits?

The WCCD online store offers rain barrels and other supplies, including: downspout diverters, linking hoses, and pedestal risers. Additionally, we now offer 275 gallon totes for bigger water catchment systems. Composting Tumblers are also available, with an easy to use design to rotate and speed up decomposition to turn your food waste into a valuable soil amendment quickly. You can learn more on the [WCCD website](#) or pre-order yours today:

Shop for Rain Barrels and Composters

FreeTree Giveaway in the City of Ann Arbor

By Sean Reynolds, Urban Trees Initiative Coordinator, City of Ann Arbor

The City of Ann Arbor's 10,000 Trees Initiative is excited to announce a FreeTree giveaway in celebration of Arbor Day! Through this giveaway event, you can receive free conifer transplants to plant on your private property. We will have Norway Spruce, White Spruce, White Pine, and Arborvitae/White Cedar available.

All of the trees available through this event were donated to the City by the [Washtenaw County Conservation District](#), and were managed by Brines Farm, here in Washtenaw County. Multiple distribution events will be held across Arbor Day weekend, at various sites city-wide.

Delivery options are also available for those with mobility or access challenges. Check out www.a2annarbor.org/10ktrees for the registration form, and for updates on where and when you can receive your free trees! Tree care and planting information will be provided with every tree. The 10,000 Trees Initiative is a part of A²ZERO, the City's carbon neutrality plan.



Plan now for Conservation Stewardship Program Eligibility

By Erez Brandvain, Conservation Technician

The Washtenaw County Conservation District (WCCD) and Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) Teams have been hard at work finalizing Conservation Plans for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) as the deadlines have come and gone in the past few weeks. This means that if you have submitted an application and have had a field visit by a Technician, you are in the que and your Conservation Plan is either in the works, or completed, and next steps are being taken to process your application. If you did not complete an application or conservation plan for CSP before March 5th, now is the time to prepare for the next round! [\(Continued...\)](#)



Want to leave a legacy that will live on for 300 years or more?

The stately native Swamp White Oak grows at a moderate pace and can outlive 300 years. But don't let the name deceive you, while it is often found in low lying moist areas, it is highly tolerant of compacted soils and even drought, making it a good yard or street tree.

In addition to providing good shade, fall color, and acorn forage, it is a literal bird feeder, as oaks top the list of supporting over 532 caterpillar species; the primary food source for many birds during rearing season.

Our final offerings for the Spring Tree & Shrub sale are going fast:

[Plant your legacy with an oak!](#)



A Delicious Cafeteria for Wildlife:

The American Hazelnut will dazzle your landscape with showy catkins in the spring, and a kaleidoscope of colors in the fall.

It is no surprise that tasty ingredient in Nutella also serves as a grocery store for wildlife: nuts of American hazelnut, which have a higher nutritional value than acorns and beechnuts, are eaten by squirrels, foxes, deer, northern bobwhite, ruffed grouse, turkey, woodpeckers, pheasants, and deer. The leaves, twigs, and catkins are browsed by rabbits, deer, and moose. The male catkins are a winter food for turkey and ruffed grouse.

Available in singles or bundles of 25 for a naturalizing hedge or restoration project:

[Treat yourself and yard to a Hazelnut!](#)



Photo: Students plan garden at Emerson School

School & Community Habitat Grant Now Accepting Applications and Donations

We are officially launching the new and improved School & Community Habitat Grant Program. The grant program is designed to provide plants, materials, design plans, and technical support for schools and community groups looking to establish natural areas. And we need your help! The grants award will be determined by donations we receive for the program. Every dollar donated will go to a local school or community habitat installation. You can donate online now:

<https://store.washtenawcd.org/products/donate>

Are you a School or Community organization? You can sign up for more information and updates or start your application now:

<https://www.washtenawcd.org/school--community-habitat-grant.html>

Upcoming Events

**Volunteer for the
Spring Tree & Shrub
Distribution on April
21st-24th!**

Help us distribute thousands of trees, shrubs and plants to Washtenaw County residents this Spring! We will organize this volunteer opportunity to ensure social distancing and customer and volunteer safety. Sign up for volunteer shifts [here](#).

**Second Annual Native
Plant Expo &
Marketplace**

**Saturday, June 5th
from 9 a.m. to 1
p.m.** The Native Plant Expo & Marketplace offers residents one convenient location to shop for Michigan native plants from several Michigan native plant growers, learn how to establish and maintain native landscapes and connect with companies specializing in planning native landscapes.

Reserve a (free) ticket for entry [here](#).

Fish Day 2021

**Saturday, June 5th
from 12-3 p.m.** The WCCD, in cooperation with [Harrietta Hills Trout Farm](#), sponsors Fish Day events for the purchase of fish to stock ponds each spring.

Pre-order your fish with the Harrietta Hills Trout Farm for pick up on June 5th at the Farm Council Grounds.

Washtenaw County Conservation District

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