



THE CONSERVATION CONNECTION

News from MCSWCD



Protecting Today, Providing Tomorrow

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Tree & Shrub Program	Page 1
Tree Planting Volunteer Opportunities	Page 2
Spring Pond Maintenance	Page 3
Ag BMP Spotlight	Page 4
Ag Plastics Recycling	
Urban Agriculture	Page 5
Pollinator Conservation	Page 6
National Invasive Species Awareness Week	Page 7
Stormwater BMP Spotlight	Page 8
Water Quality Education	
Conservation Education Volunteer Opportunities	Page 9



It's Almost Time to Get Your Trees & Shrubs!

The 2025 Conservation Tree & Shrub Program distribution dates are approaching fast! Pre-ordered seedlings must be picked up between **9am and 5pm on April 24th or April 25th** at the Monroe County **ecopark** located at **10 Avion Drive**.

Thank you to all of our customers who are assisting in conservation efforts to enhance and protect the natural resources in Monroe County. Planting trees and shrubs provides numerous benefits from wildlife shelter and food, reducing rainwater and snowmelt runoff, preventing soil erosion, improving air and water quality, produce oxygen, assist in temperature regulation and noise reduction, and can greatly increase property aesthetics.

Our first-come, first-serve overstock sale will be Saturday, April 26th 9am — 11am (or earlier if all items sell out) also at the Monroe County ecopark. The stock is limited; not all species in our catalog may be available.

For more details on the Conservation Tree & Shrub program or to make sure you don't miss out on pre-orders by signing up for our mailing list visit our website: <https://monroecountyswcd.org/tree-shrub-program/>.



2025 Dates & Deadlines

April 24-25
Tree & Shrub Distribution

April 26
Tree & Shrub
Overstock Sale

May 22
Envirothon

**Our office will be closed
May 26th for Memorial
Day and June 19th for
Juneteenth.**

IMPORTANT TREE & SHRUB PROGRAM DATES & TIMES

Tree & Shrub Distribution	4/24 & 4/25 (9am - 5pm)
Overstock Sale	4/26 (9am - 11am)

Spring Tree Planting Volunteers Needed!

The MCSWCD is entering the second year of tree planting efforts as part of a large reforestation project funded through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) US Department of Agriculture Forest Service grant. By the time this project is completed, over 11,000 trees will have been planted restoring 200 acres of forest land in Monroe County.

This spring, over 3,000 trees need to be planted across various locations and the District is looking for volunteers to help with this planting effort.

One planting event has been scheduled where over 100 trees are being planted in the Braddock Bay Wildlife Management Area on Saturday May 3rd. Details are included on the flyer below.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

TREE PLANTING AT BRADDOCK BAY

**WHERE: FOREST ACROSS FROM
BRADDOCK BAY PARK
(199 E Manitou Rd
Rochester, NY 14612)**

WHEN: SATURDAY MAY 3RD

**TIME: 9am – noon (earlier if
planting completed)**



Come help restore canopy lost to the invasive emerald ash borer

Limited tools will be available to borrow

Please bring your own tools if you can

A few of our partners within this effort are also organizing planting events and in need of volunteers including the **Oatka Creek Watershed Committee** and the **Rush Recreation and Park Association**.

These organizations will be planting on the southwest region of the county.

To connect with the Oatka Creek Watershed Committee about the upcoming planting events at Canawaugus Park and the Genesee Country Village & Museum property, please email the chairman, Peter Lent, at LENT@FRONTIERNET.NET

To connect with the Rush Recreation and Park Association about the upcoming planting events at Hundred Acre Nature Park please email their organization at RUSH.NY.RPA@GMAIL.COM



"USDA USFS is an equal opportunity provid-

Spring Pond Maintenance Tips

With our first cold and snowy winter in a few years, it may be time to brush up on proper spring pond maintenance for all of our county's pond owners. There are five easy steps landowners can take in the springtime to get a jump start on algal growth and the resulting poor water quality, as even when your pond freezes, aquatic plants and algae are growing under that ice.

- 1. Clean the shoreline:** The water quality of your pond isn't just dependent on what is in the pond but what is entering the pond from outside sources. Spring cleaning isn't just for your garage or gardens but also the shoreline of your pond. Debris that has collected along the shorelines from our late fall to early spring, whether trash blown in from Rochester winds or natural debris like fallen leaves and branches should be cleaned up. Plus, once it is time for the first mow of the year, make sure you are mowing **away** from the pond. Grass clippings can be a major source of nutrients entering your pond which leads to algal blooms.
- 2. Establish/maintain riparian buffer:** Cleaning your shoreline does not mean getting rid of grasses, shrubs, and trees that are along the shoreline. Quite the opposite in fact. These plants act as a vegetative buffer stabilizing the bank with their root growth and filtering pollutants and nutrients that otherwise would enter straight into your pond leading to algal blooms. Vegetative buffers also can act as a natural deterrent to Canada Geese whose feces contributes to algal blooms, as well.
- 3. Clean what is in the pond:** Like the shoreline, removing any branches, leaves, and grass clumps in the water can help eliminate some of the nutrients that lead to algal blooms. Taking note of invasive species present in your pond and researching proper removal techniques can also be appropriate in spring before they begin to multiply in the warmer months.
- 4. Perform maintenance checks on any pond equipment:** Many landowners install fountains or aerators in their ponds to keep dissolved oxygen moving. This is why proper functioning equipment can be so important. While aerators are common to leave over winter, fountains are routinely removed during the winter. Before installing a fountain again, performing a routine maintenance check can increase your equipment's longevity.
- 5. Perform routine pond inspections starting in spring:** As mentioned, aquatic vegetation and algae grow throughout winter, so the sooner you begin inspecting your pond the better. Weekly or bi-weekly inspections can help you notice the start of an algal bloom or nuisance vegetation before it becomes a larger issue.

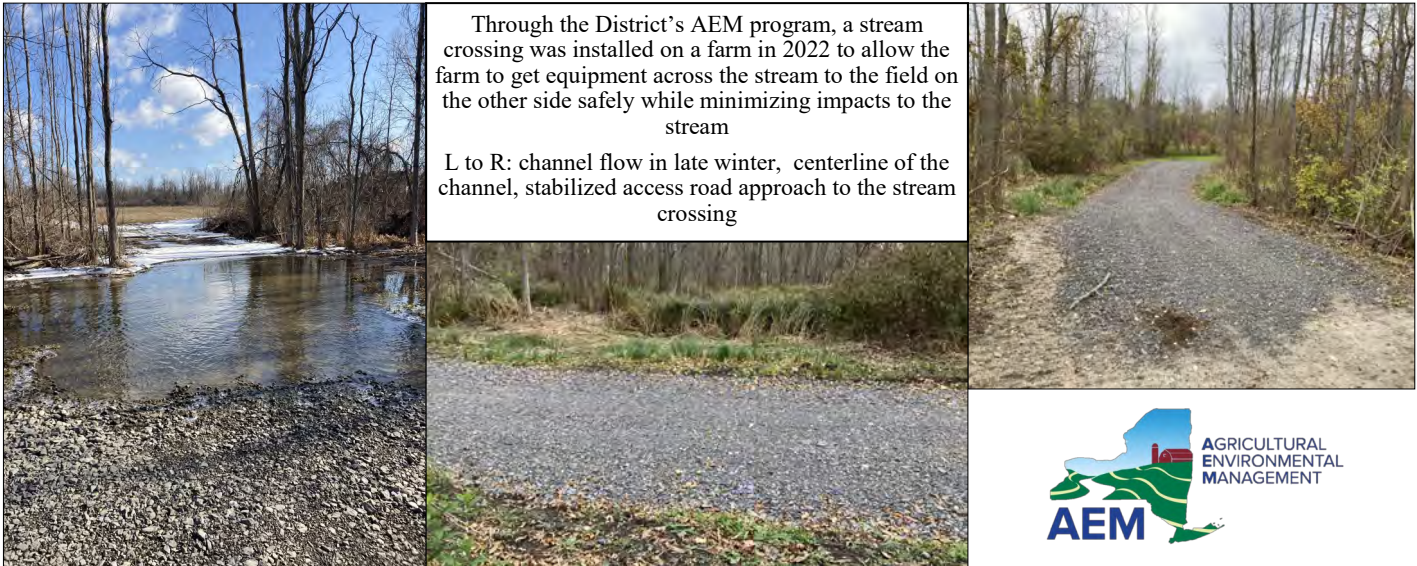


There are a multitude of pond management products on the market that may or may not help with your pond's water quality. Frequent testing of water quality and having a pond management plan can help you determine the maintenance needs of your pond.

Agricultural BMP Spotlight: Stream Crossing

Owning agricultural land that is split by the presence of a stream may result in the need for a best management practice (BMP) such as a stream crossing, whether it be a bridge, culvert, or ford crossing (pictured below).

Stream crossings are when a structure or stabilized area is constructed across a stream providing controlled access for people and their livestock or equipment. A functional stream crossing also helps protect water quality and aquatic organisms by reducing sediment, nutrient, organic, and inorganic loading into the stream. Another purpose of stream crossings are to prevent erosion to the streambanks and bed, which in turn will also help protect water quality and aquatic organisms.



Agricultural Plastics Recycling Program



ATTENTION FARMERS!

AGRICULTURAL PLASTICS RECYCLING PICKUP IS COMING TO MONROE COUNTY

PICKUP IS TYPICALLY IN JUNE

WHAT IS ACCEPTED?
CLEAN PLASTIC CONTAINERS (HDPE)

CONTAINERS MUST BE TRIPLE RINSED AND FREE OF ALL RESIDUE (STAINS ARE OKAY; ALL CAPS AND LABELS MUST BE REMOVED)

FOR MORE PICK-UP INSTRUCTIONS AND TO BE PUT ON THE SCHEDULE PLEASE CONTACT THE MONROE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

MONROE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

MCSWCD@MONROECOUNTY.GOV

585-753-7380

2025 Rochester Urban Agriculture Conference & Seed Swap

Earlier this month the District participated in the 2025 Spring Urban Agriculture Conference held at East High School. This conference is an annual effort coordinated by the Urban Agriculture Working Group (UAWG), of which the District is a member along with Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) of Monroe County, CCE Harvest NY, and many local community garden groups. The UAWG's mission is to strengthen Rochester NY's urban agriculture movement, develop community leaders, and collaboratively identify and address policy, resource and educational barriers to urban agriculture and community gardening of all kinds.



The District was one of over 15 organizations who tabled at the conference providing the opportunity to learn about our work with urban agriculture to a record breaking 230+ attendees. The conference also featured various workshops including healthy soils and healthy gardens, the power of community gardening, and using gardens for de-stressing. This year also combined efforts with the annual seed swap hosted by Fruition Seeds, where thousands of seeds were shared for vegetables, perennials, houseplants, and more.

The conference was attended by record numbers and actually sold out this year! Thanks to all who attended and dedicated some time to sharing their experiences and learning more about urban agriculture. For more information or to be added to the UAWG list-serve, please contact our office.



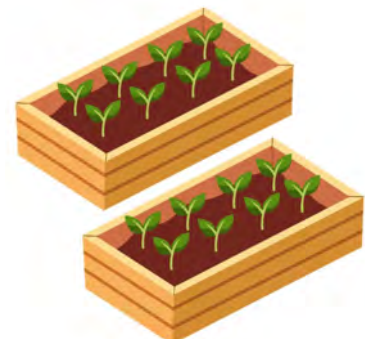
Spring Raised Bed Prep

Gardening with raised beds is becoming more and more popular and just like in-ground gardens, raised bed gardens require some preparation and maintenance before the next growing season.

If this is your first season using your raised beds, then first and foremost you need to make sure you have chosen the right location for your beds so you will get the best results. Your beds should be placed in a location where they will get six to eight hours of sunlight each day. This typically is the southern side of your property with the best oriented east to west on its long side.

After location, an important next step is properly sourcing your soil for new beds and existing beds that need more or fresh soil. Be sure to know the source of your soil and the quality before purchasing.

It is important not to start prepping your raised beds too early as any leaf litter or debris still in the beds could be where a bee or caterpillar has chosen to ride out winter. See the next page for more information on delayed spring cleaning to protect our pollinators.



Protect our Pollinators: Don't Clean Your Gardens and Lawn Too Early

Did you know that New York State is home to over 450 native bee species? This doesn't include honey bees which are not native to North America, but instead were brought over from Europe and are now naturalized. The majority of our native bee species overwinter as pupae, patiently waiting to emerge during spring and summer to continue their life cycle. Not just bees either, many of our native insects tough out the winter waiting for warm temperatures to emerge. Some, like mantises,



Bees will nest together in plant stalks over the winter for protection - Xerces Society

lay their eggs on rigid stalks that won't fall over where the larvae hatch in June when it's warm enough, while everyone's favorite brown and black caterpillar that wanders everywhere in the fall, the larvae of the woolly bear moth, finds some leaf litter to spend the winter protected. Silkmoths, like a luna moth for one example, spend winters in cocoons attached to the tips of branches. One of our earliest seen butterfly species each year, the mourning cloak, spends winters in brush piles riding out the cold temperatures. Adult queen bumblebees also overwinter in leaf litter or debris piles.

As you can see, all of these species and more rely on leaves, twigs, and other debris being left alone until their time to emerge. While increased warmer days in February and March may make us landowners itch to clean our yards and gardens out, consider leaving the brush piles, leaf piles, and remaining dead stalks of the year past for a little longer to let our pollinator species survive and emerge when they are ready.



Mourning cloaks (L) and bumblebee queens (R) spend winter in debris piles. © Xerces Society

What about the concept of "No Mow May?" While this concept is nice in thought, it really only applies to properties that already have existing beneficial pollinators present. Just letting your yard grow out for an entire month is more likely to lead to more aggressive species growing that have little to no benefit to our pollinators, including invasive species, especially if you are in a more urban setting. If you truly want to make your lawn pollinator-friendly, then the best way to do that is to convert some of your lawn to pollinator-friendly habitat. Creating pollinator meadows or gardens takes work and maintenance, it is not simply letting your yard go. Not to mention, many town/village/city codes likely have ordinances for properties regarding vegetation height or unsightliness. Dedicating part of your property to a pollinator garden is a better way to help our region's pollinators.

Stop the Spread of Invasive Species

Last month included National Invasive Species Awareness Week. As warmer temperatures arrive with the welcoming of spring, more and more of us will be enjoying the outdoors in many of our parks or own backyards. Invasive species often have a jump start on our native species whether it is early, fast-growing plants or invasive pests hatching before native insects.

Doing simple checks while walking this spring and summer can help stop the spread of invasive species in our county. Species like garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*) can go to seed by late May, while invasive insects like spotted lanternfly (*Lycorma delicatula*) will begin to hatch once temperatures stay above 50°F. Checking your clothing, pets, hiking equipment, and vehicles for unintended hitchhikers is an important way to stop the spread.



Spotted lanternflies will lay their egg masses on anything

We all love to bring our furry friends along with us when outdoors, but unleashed pets can be one of the top ways invasive species are spread around. Many of these species have adapted to produce sticky seeds that get caught on the fur of animals when they pass by. These seeds don't know that they're attaching to your dog versus a deer. Now instead of that seed dropping a few yards away it is travelling on your pet back to your home where it can now spread to your lawn or landscaping and beyond. Keeping pets leashed so they stay on trails and then checking their fur and paws for any insects or seeds before returning home can eliminate unwanted spread.

As for you and your equipment, the same checking of your boots, hiking poles, and other equipment can help stop the spread as well.

In late spring, Memorial Day will mark the start of camping season and this is when it is most important check everything for any invasive species all the way until the end of camping season in the fall when most invasives are spreading their seeds. Inspecting tents and campers before leaving campgrounds where invasive insects like spotted lanternfly are present are important as these insects lay their eggs on anything and everything including manmade structures and vehicles.

It is also important to remember when going camping or coming home, NEVER transport firewood from another region. In Monroe County, it is hard to miss the devastation left behind from the invasive emerald ash borer (*Agilus planipennis*). Some parts of the state, like the Adirondacks (ADK), have only recently begun to see the effects or have yet to see the effects of the ash borer. The transportation of firewood from areas outside the ADK is a huge cause of its presence up there now. Other invasive pests that like to hitchhike on firewood include spotted lanternfly and Asian longhorned beetle (*Anoplophera glabripennis*), along with the invasive fungal disease oak wilt.



When firewood is brought in from another region where ash borer has not been introduced it leads to widespread canopy loss, in turn allowing other invasive species to thrive

What is Stormwater and Why Should We Care About It?

Stormwater is the water from rain or snowmelt that runs off into our local waterways. Whether it's running off a roof, a parking lot, a construction site, or your lawn it has the potential to impact our streams, rivers, and lakes depending on how it is managed. Improper stormwater management can result in a number of unwanted issues for homeowners and their neighbors including flooding, streambank erosion, pollution, and more. These issues don't just stop at the end of your driveway or road either, as what you do on your property can affect your entire watershed.



As stormwater runoff is generated from rain events, it can transport various pollutants into our waterways affecting water quality and the health of aquatic organisms. The runoff picks up whatever is in its path and takes it to the nearest waterbody including lawn treatment chemicals, pet waste, litter, oils and greases from cars, and more that can lead to increased nutrient levels in the nearest receiving waterbody. Higher nutrient levels can also degrade water quality and potentially lead to algal blooms.

If a landowner owns property adjacent to a waterbody, it is important to help the stream (and your land) by having a tree and shrub riparian buffer present adjacent to the streambanks. Not only will buffer plantings help minimize the effects of out-of-bank flooding, but they can also reduce the potential for severe erosion (sediment pollution) as their roots hold the bank soils in place. Additionally, the plantings can absorb nutrients from runoff before it enters the stream. Highly manicured lawns or bare soil won't be able to absorb as much stormwater as lawns with trees and shrubs, so help improve water quality and protect your property at the same time by simply planting!

Water Quality Educational Opportunities

The MCSWCD has been leading stream health activities for youth groups in the county in recent years and we would love to lead an activity for you too! These activities are hands-on and allow kids to get into our streams and examine and think about indicators of stream health.

Using kick-nets, kids sample for macroinvertebrates within one of our local streams. The goal is to find and identify the macroinvertebrate larvae and depending on the species found and how many, the kids can then determine the relative health of their local stream, at least in that particular sampling area.

Aquatic macroinvertebrates can be broken up into three groups: pollution sensitive, somewhat pollution tolerant, and pollution tolerant. As their names suggest, macroinvertebrates that are pollution sensitive would not be found in streams affected by heavy amounts of pollution while those that are pollution tolerant would still be present in pollution-heavy streams while pollution sensitive would not.

If you are an educator, scout leader, community organization member, etc. and are interested in having this activity hosted for your school or group please reach out to our office for scheduling. This activity can be performed May through early September with May and June seeming to be the best time for finding a good variety of organisms.



Youth use kick-net sampling to find aquatic macros

**Monroe County Soil & Water
Conservation District**

145 Paul Road, Building 5
Rochester, NY 14624
Phone: 585-753-7380
M-F 8am-4pm

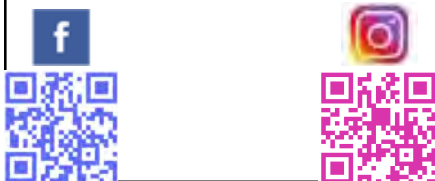
mcswcd@monroecounty.gov

www.monroecountyswcd.org

**Like us on Facebook and
follow us on Instagram by
visiting the links or using
the QR codes below!**

[http://www.facebook.com/
MonroeCountySWCD](http://www.facebook.com/MonroeCountySWCD)

[https://www.instagram.com/
monroecoswcd_ny/](https://www.instagram.com/monroecoswcd_ny/)



Board of Directors:

Rollin Pickering
Chairman/NY Grange Rep.

Maureen Leupold
Vice Chair/Member at Large

Chuck Colby
Treasurer/Member at Large

Marc Krieger
Asst. Treasurer/Farm Bureau Rep.

Steve Brew
Legislative Rep.

District Staff:

Kelly Emerick
(CPESC, CPSWQ, CPMSM)
Executive Director

James Sroka
Soil & Water Resource Technician

Kristin White
Account Clerk

Jacob Kearney
Conservation Program Specialist

Youth Environmental Education Volunteers Needed!



The annual Envirothon is being held May 22nd at Ellison Park and we will need some volunteers to help make this event another success! To check out what this event is all about, visit our Envirothon page on our website <https://monroecountyswcd.org/envirothon/>

Volunteers will help with event set-up and take-down, picture taking, and student team management. If you are interested in volunteering to help out at the competition in May, please reach out to our office via email at mcswcd@monroecounty.gov or phone at (585) 753-7380.



This newsletter is published quarterly by the Monroe County Soil & Water Conservation District and is available at no cost to interested landowners, land users, and to the general public. If you would like to receive our newsletter, call us with your email address or view it online at www.monroecountyswcd.org. Programs and services offered through the Monroe County Soil & Water Conservation District are made possible through the financial support of the County of Monroe, State of New York, specialized grant opportunities, and fundraising programs. All SWCD programs and services are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis without regard to age, color, national origin, political beliefs, religion, sex, age, marital status, sexual orientation, or disability. Our Board of Director meetings are open to the public; please call for information.