



Grass Roots for Conservation



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Elkhart County Soil & Water Conservation District

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2021 ELKHART COUNTY INDIANA MASTER NATURALIST



"The mission of the Indiana Master Naturalist program is to bring together natural resource specialists with adult learners to foster an understanding of Indiana's plants, water, soils and wildlife, and promote natural resource volunteer service within the State of Indiana."

Date	Subject	Location
May 26	Land Management	Merry Lea
June 2	Botany/Photography	Goshen College
June 9	Entomology	DeFries Gardens
June 16	Soils/Trees	Bootlake
June 23	Mammals/Birds	Bonneyville
June 30	Fish/Herpetology	Oxbow
July 7	Water	Conservation Club
July 14	People & Natural Resources	Elkhart Co. Museum

\$175

class fee includes
all materials for
the course

Requirements to become a Certified IMN through Elkhart Co. SWCD:

- Be at least 18 years old
- Register for the class
- Pay class fee once registration is confirmed
- Attend at least 6 out of 8 classes
- Complete final open book quiz
- Complete 24 hours of volunteer service



For more information or to register please contact Jenna at jwait@elkhartcounty.com or call 574-523-2033

**Registration ends
May 1**

BLOGGING BMP'S

A monthly Blog discussing the Best Management Practices (BMP's) that must be used to aid in erosion and sediment control.

Welcome back to another edition of Blogging BMP's! I hope everyone has been taking advantage of the unseasonably warm temperatures we have been experiencing here in good old Elkhart County. I remember as a kid feeling so invigorated as the winter transitioned into spring and the first daffodils poked out of the ground to let us know that things are about to come back to life. Nowadays, I look for different cues to let me know spring has sprung and it is not as delicate as some blooming flowers, no, it is more like the sounds of tractors in the fields, back hoes in the ditches, and dozers at the jobsites. I still appreciate the small patches of flowers that pepper our landscape, but the adult in me knows it is time to work.

As construction has ramped up in the area, I can't help but feel like something is different this year. There is a frantic pace that has accompanied the recent desire for families to re-connect with nature and hop in an RV or boat and head out where the restrictions of hotels and typical vacation destinations don't apply. This is a great thing for our area as much of the economy thrives on manufacturing these exact items and the components that they are built with. Jobs are abundant and the pay is great, however, homes and apartments are not as abundant and we need places for all of these workers to live. So, what do we do? WE BUILD! Homes are being built faster than ever. Those empty lots at the end of the road in your neighborhood are now piles of dirt with new basements going in and stacks of lumber sitting next to them. This is great, right? The truth is, it is fantastic and terrible at the same time. Why it is fantastic is the easy one, but the terrible part might need some explanation.

As homes are put in, builders are expected to follow some rules set forth by the Indiana Department of Environmental Management or, as we in the business like to refer to it, IDEM. These guideline are not the exact same for every project, but most home sites, especially in neighborhoods, require some fairly common practices to prevent sediment from entering our stormwater systems and ultimately our waterways. I will not list them all, but here are the main items.

1. Each home site should have a construction entrance for vehicles going in and out of the jobsite. These stones help to remove sediment form the tires of the vehicles and equipment by creating a rough surface that will "scrub" the sediment off the tires before they enter the roadway. This is the only place the equipment should enter or exit the site.
2. Any point where erosion may potentially leave the site should have some type of filter BMP that will allow water to go through, but not the sediment. The two most common are silt fence or straw wattles. These are highly effective but do require a fair amount of maintainence to keep them operating efficiently.
3. The drains in the neighborhood streets should have some sort of inlet protection. The easiest to notice will be a fiber mat (usually coconut) that is installed on top of the grate, but basket filters are also common. These both need to be maintained as well as sediment collects in and around these filters and they need to be cleaned or replaced regularly.
4. Each site should have some type of dumpster or trash containment to prevent items from blowing off the property.

There are several other BMPs that are required on individual building lots and a full list can be found by holding your smart phone's camera over **QR code 1** at the bottom of the page or by going to the following link https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-12/documents/cgp_small_lot_swppp_brochure-508_0 If you have homes being built in your neighborhood and you feel like the builders are not following these guidelines, please hold your smart phone's camera over the second **QR code 2** at the bottom or go to the following link <https://www.elkcoswcd.org/homeowners/report-a-polluter/> and let us know so we may properly educate the builders on preventing sediment from leaving the building site. Until next time, keep the streets clean and the yards green!



House with straw wattles in place



House with sediment



QR code 1



QR code 2

COVER CROP MANAGEMENT: TERMINATION CONSIDERATIONS



Last fall you planted your cover crops, and they've been growing throughout the winter. Now as we move into spring, it is time to think about how you will manage their termination before planting your cash crop. There are four main methods of cover crop termination: winterkilling, tilling, mowing or crimping, and herbicides. Each have their benefits and disadvantages. Winterkilling is the easiest form of termination, but is only applicable to certain species, such as radishes or oats that cannot tolerate our cold winter temperatures. However, if the winter is not harsh enough to kill the crop, you may need to depend on another type of termination to completely kill it. Tilling is an effective form of termination, but can be expensive and negate many of the positive benefits of cover crops. Mowing or crimping are not as widely used and are limited by growth stage of the cover crop and are only applicable to certain cover crop species.

The most commonly used form of cover crop termination is herbicide treatment. When deciding how and when to kill your cover crop with herbicides there are many factors that need to be taken into consideration. The first is the cover crop species. Is your cover crop a broadleaf, grass, or a mix of both? Depending on your answer to this question, different types of herbicides will need to be used. Cover crop mixes provide great benefits, but can require more care when selecting a herbicide due to the combination of species. Always make sure you consult the herbicide label or a weed control guide to make sure the herbicide you select will be effective on your type of cover crop. Growth stage and height of the cover crop can affect the type of herbicide and rate. In certain growth stages, a herbicide may not be as effective, and it may be better to consider another method of termination. ALWAYS consider your following cash crop when making herbicide selections. Make sure any residual effects will not carry over, and observe the planting restrictions.

Several other factors out of your control can also come into play when terminating cover crops, but with good planning complications can be avoided. Make sure to scout the field for weeds that have moved in over the winter. Many cover crops help with weed suppression, but may not be 100% effective. Double check that your herbicide will kill these weeds as well as the cover crop. Also, the weather can play a role in herbicide effectiveness. Cool and cloudy conditions that sometimes develop in the spring can slow herbicide effectiveness. You also want to apply the herbicide early enough in the day that it has time to work before the temperatures drop at night. By taking this into consideration, you can help to maximize the effectiveness of the herbicide by applying on days where it will be successful.

With an effective strategy, cover crop termination can be easily integrated into your pre-planting and planting plan. And remember, it's not too early to start planning your cover crop strategy for next year!

For more information about cover crops check out these publications and websites:

- Successful Cover Crop Termination with Herbicides, Purdue Extension Publication WS-50-W, April 2012.
- Annual Ryegrass Cover Crop Management for Corn and Soybean Production: 2012 Management Recommendations, Oregon Ryegrass Commission
- Indiana NRCS Soil Health Website: www.tinyurl.com/indianasoilhealth

APRIL IS AWARENESS MONTH FOR INVASIVE PLANT PESTS



Each year, harmful invasive plant pests and diseases cost the United States about \$40 billion in crop losses, damage to forests and vulnerable ecosystems, and expensive eradication and control efforts. It only takes one person who moves one piece of infested firewood, one infected plant, or one piece of infested fruit to spread these invasive pests to a new area.

The good news is that individuals can stop the spread of invasive pests by looking for and reporting suspicious insects or signs of damage. For example, USDA detected the Asian Longhorned Beetle in Boston in 2010, when a single groundskeeper with a keen eye noticed and reported an unusual dime-sized hole in a tree. That one call provided early warning to jumpstart an eradication effort that quickly eliminated this destructive pest from that city.

Indiana currently has two plant pests that have become widespread in the state: Emerald Ash Borer and European Gypsy Moth. Both species pose a significant threat to species of trees and shrubs common to the native forests of the state. The gypsy moth is native to Europe and the ash borer is native to Asia. Both started with only a few individual insects and quickly spread to cover large areas of the US.

Here's what you can do to help keep invasive pests from spreading as spring gets underway and all year round:

- Spring is a busy time for buying plants. Buy yours from reputable nurseries or online businesses. Ask if they comply with federal and state quarantine restrictions to ensure their plants are pest-free.
- Planning to travel? Whether it's between states or to another country, check with your USDA APHIS office before you bring back fruits, vegetables or plants, so

you know what's allowed. And when returning from abroad, always declare all agricultural items to U.S. Customs and Border Protection, so they can make sure items are free of harmful pests or diseases.

- When enjoying the great outdoors, don't move untreated firewood. Instead, buy or responsibly gather firewood near the place you'll burn it. Or, take certified, heat-treated firewood on your trip with you.
- If you live in an area under state or federal quarantine for an invasive pest, don't move produce or plants off your property. Also, allow authorized agricultural workers access to your property for pest or disease surveys.
- Make sure to clean outdoor items before moving them. Wash dirt from outdoor gear and tires, before traveling long distances to or from fishing, hunting or camping trips. If relocating to a new home, clean lawn furniture and other outdoor items before placing them in a moving van or storage pod.
- Finally, report any signs of invasive pests by going to www.HungryPests.com.

To learn more, visit www.HungryPests.com. The website includes photos and descriptions of 19 invasive pests that can be moved easily by people, an online federal quarantine tracker by state, and phone numbers for reporting signs of invasive pests.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- May 1 2021 Elkhart County IMN Registration DEADLINE:**
For info or to register please contact Jenna at jwait@elkhartcounty.com or call (574) 523-2033.
- May 5 Rain Garden & Rain Barrel Workshop:**
Learn how and why to implement Rain Gardens and Rain Barrels at one of our workshops. 5:30 PM, **Bonneyville Schoolhouse**.
"Please note that each workshop is the same"
To register contact Elkhart County SWCD (574) 523-2030 59358 County Road 7, Elkhart, IN 46517 latkins@elkhartcounty.com
- May 13 Rain Garden & Rain Barrel Workshop:**
Learn how and why to implement Rain Gardens and Rain Barrels at one of our workshops. 5:30 PM, **Oxbow Park**.
"Please note that each workshop is the same"
To register contact Elkhart County SWCD (574) 523-2030 59358 County Road 7, Elkhart, IN 46517 latkins@elkhartcounty.com
- May 17 SWCD Board Meeting:** 5:30 PM, SWCD Office, 59358 County Road 7, Elkhart

SWCD - NRCS CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP DIRECTORY

59358 County Road 7, Elkhart, IN 46517

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