



Grass Roots for Conservation



Vol. 47

No. 6

June 2022

www.elkcoswcd.org

Elkhart County Soil & Water Conservation District

59358 County Road 7, Elkhart, IN 46517 ~ Phone: (574) 523-2030 – jhess@elkhartcounty.com

NATIVE Plant Sale

ORDER DEADLINE
JULY 29

Plants are sold in kits of **50 plants**.

The kits are **\$150 each**.

Orders must be placed by **July 29th**.

Orders will be ready for
pickup September 20-23
at the Elkhart County SWCD office.

For more information or to place an order
please visit **www.elkcoswcd.org**



Rain Garden Kit

Swamp Milkweed
Bristly Sedge
Brown Fox Sedge
Blue Flag Iris
Common Rush
Marsh Blazing Star
Cardinal Flower
Great Blue Lobelia
Riddell's Goldenrod
Culver's Root

Prairie Wildflower Kit

Sand Coreopsis
Early Goldenrod
Common Milkweed
Blue Wild Indigo
Broad-leaved Purple Coneflower
Rough Blazing Star
Foxglove Beard Tongue
Black-eyed Susan
Little Bluestem
Ohio Spiderwort

Prairie Grass Kit

Big Bluestem
Side-oats Grama
Copper-Shouldered Oval Sedge
Canada Wild Rye
Bottlebrush Grass
June Grass
Switch Grass
Little Bluestem
Indian Grass
Prairie Dropseed



ELKHART COUNTY
SOIL & WATER
CONSERVATION DISTRICT

574-523-2030

59358 CR 7

Elkhart, IN 46517

www.elkcoswcd.org

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! If you have not noticed, this issue of Grass Roots is focusing heavily on native plants and the many benefits that a native prairie can offer both for the functionality and aesthetics of our open areas here in Elkhart County. Interestingly enough, and here comes another shameless plug, we have a native plant sale that happens to be accepting orders right now so hop on over to our website and place your order today! No, but for real, if you have been following along closely you may remember this topic being covered in the August 2020 issue that suggested alternatives to our status quo ground stabilization practices. The three things that we encouraged were bio-swales, rain gardens and native plantings in retention basins. These are all great options, but in the fast paced construction industry that this blog focuses on, not the most practical.

Not to continue to look back at previous discussions (although that is kind of what blogs do), but I have discussed the process of terminating land disturbance projects that are covered under the Construction Stormwater General Permit (formerly Rule 5), and the main item that keeps a project from closing out is final stabilization.

According to the new CSGP,

final stabilization of a project site is achieved when all land-disturbing activities have been completed and a uniform (evenly distributed, without large bare areas) perennial vegetative cover with a density of seventy percent (70%) has been established on all unpaved disturbed areas, and areas not covered by permanent structures, or equivalent permanent stabilization measures have been employed.

Anyone that has ever attempted to grow anything knows that not all-perennial vegetation is created equally. If the pace of the construction industry is fast, the grass needs to be fast right along with it. The good news is that IDEM recognizes that we should be looking for more creative ways to incorporate the benefits that native plants can offer to our urban environments rather than steering contractors and landowners to doing the fastest method of holding soil in place.

In the new permit,

This requirement does not apply to projects or specific stormwater measures that utilize native vegetation and/or special vegetative plantings that are either required by a water quality permit/authorization or part of the design and functionality of a stormwater measure provided the activity does not pose a threat that will result in off-site sedimentation.

In other words, the native plantings take a little longer to establish so they are willing to close out projects before the 70% dense and uniform coverage is achieved.

So, I say we should look at those large, grassy areas of our projects and consider that it doesn't have to look like the outfield of Wrigley Field; rather, it could more closely resemble the prairie that the Ingalls family frolicked in during the late 1800s. Not to mention, less mowing!

For more information on our native plant sale or the Construction Stormwater General Permit, visit our website at <https://www.elkcoswcd.org> or use the QR code to take you to our flyer. Remember, native plants are something we should all **root** for.



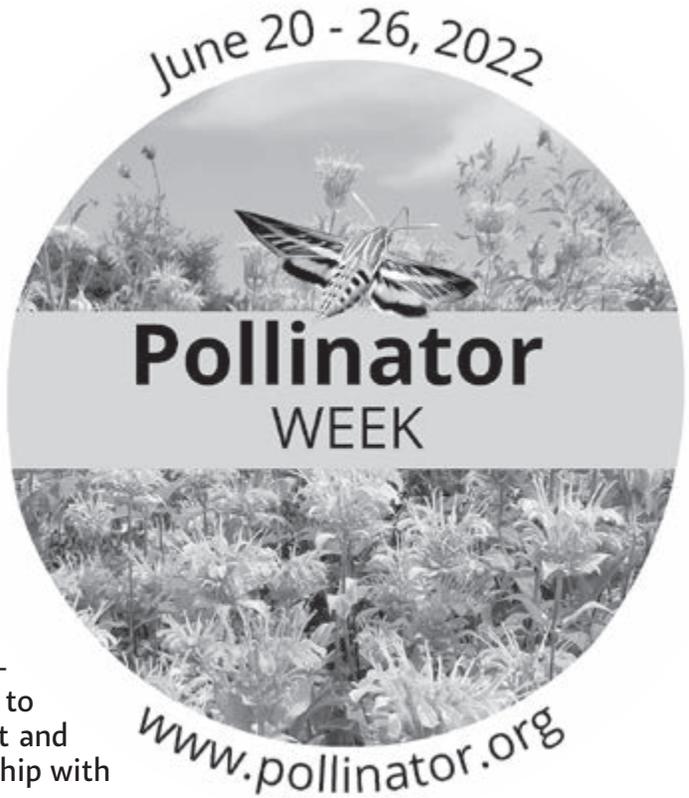
Let's Get Native for Pollinators!

Pollinator Week is an annual celebration in support of pollinator health that was initiated and is managed by the Pollinator Partnership. There are so many ways that you can celebrate Pollinator Week: Wings of Life. One way the SWCD will be celebrating is by educating the public by posting fun facts and resources on social media. Another big way we are celebrating is by hosting a native plant sale to help our local pollinators.

Why native plants? Native plants have had many years of adapting to our regional soils, hydrology, and climate. They have deep root systems that help to stabilize soil and infiltrate stormwater. So, what do they have to do with Pollinator Week? Native plants provide habitat and food for native pollinators and have symbiotic relationship with them.

When most people think of pollinators, they think of bees and butterflies, but there are so many pollinators most people don't consider. Flies, beetles, wasps, ants, moths, birds, small mammals and even bats are all native pollinators that we have in our region. Pollinators are important to everyone whether they realize it or not. It is estimated that 1/3 of all foods and beverages are made possible by pollinators and produces about \$20 billion worth of products annually. About 75% of all flowering species of plants need help from pollinators to reproduce.

Let's get native! Check out www.elkcoswcd.org to purchase native plants to help out our pollinators. You can find more information about Pollinator Week at www.pollinator.org/pollinator-week.



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NATIVE PLANT KIT DEFINITIONS

Rain Garden Kit

A rain garden is a shallow depression in a landscape where stormwater typically collects or drains. They are often located below a downspout or driveway. The rain garden kit comes with plants that are adapted to having “wet feet”. These plants can take on heavy stormwater in poorly draining soils and can tolerate periods of dry weather as well. This kit comes with mostly forbs (flowering plants) and a couple grasses/sedges to create a beautiful garden that attracts beneficial wildlife and helps infiltrate stormwater.

Prairie Wildflower Kit

A prairie is defined as an ecosystem consisting of a temperate climate and a composition of grasses, forbs, and shrubs (rather than trees) as the dominant vegetation. The prairie wildflower kit is designed to provide a variety of flowering species (forbs) for most soil types with full sun. This kit will add beauty to the landscape while providing habitat and food for wildlife, especially pollinators.

Prairie Grass Kit

The Prairie Grass Kit is similar to the Prairie Wildflower Kit, but it contains grasses rather than forbs. These grasses will grow at varying heights providing an aesthetically pleasing view to humans and various habitats for wildlife. Most of these grasses have deep roots that help them to survive short periods of drought. The plants will need access to full sun.

UPCOMING EVENTS

- June 20 **SWCD Board Meeting:** 5:30 PM, SWCD Office, 59358 County Road 7, Elkhart, IN
- July 4 **Independence Day Holiday:** Our office will be **CLOSED** for the Independence Day Holiday.
- July 14 **Pasture Walk:** Ezra & Ida Schrock – 1-3 pm @ LaGrange, IN – **Topic:** Dairy
- July 18 **SWCD Board Meeting:** 5:30 PM, SWCD Office, 59358 County Road 7, Elkhart, IN
- August 11 **Pasture Walk:** Vernon Borkholder – 1-3 pm @ Nappanee, IN – **Topic:** Organic Dairy
- August 15 **SWCD Board Meeting:** 5:30 PM, SWCD Office, 59358 County Road 7, Elkhart, IN
- Sept. 12 **Pasture Walk:** Kevin Miller – **Monday**, 6 pm @ Millersburg, IN – **Topic:** Sheep/Grazing
- Sept. 19 **SWCD Board Meeting:** 5:30 PM, SWCD Office, 59358 County Road 7, Elkhart, IN
- Oct. 13 **Pasture Walk:** Kenneth Imhoff – 1-3 pm @ Tippecanoe, IN – **Topic:** Organic Dairy/Pasture Irrigation/Bees
- Oct. 17 **SWCD Board Meeting:** 5:30 PM, SWCD Office, 59358 County Road 7, Elkhart, IN

SWCD - NRCS CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP DIRECTORY

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