

CONSERVATION education

Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District

May 2020

Welcome to the Conservation Education Newsletter from the Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District. This quarterly publication will keep you up to date on conservation education news from our District.



At Home Conservation Education Opportunities...

Patch Program



To help with learning at home, VASWCD is offering the opportunity for any student in third grade and above to earn a Soil Expert Patch, and fourth graders and above can earn a Living in Your Watershed Patch. FREE patches for students while supplies last, until June 30th! Please visit www.vaswcd.org/scout-patch-program to learn more!



Conservation Poster Contest...

Our Conservation Poster Contest deadline has been extended to **SEPTEMBER 15th**. Entries may be submitted electronically, so design, create and submit while at home. All Loudoun County public, private and homeschooled students grades K-12 are encouraged to enter. Creating a poster is a great way for your student to learn about and promote pollinator conservation. This year's theme is **"Where would we BEE without Pollinators?"** **Check out the Flyer at the end of this newsletter** to find out contest rules and more detail, or by visiting www.loudounsoilandwater.com/education/sws-poster-contest



FREE Pollinator Materials

Visit our website to download FREE pollinator posters, bookmarks, and fun activity sheets & booklets for students of all ages. Get your FREE downloadable pollinator goodies here:



www.loudounsoilandwater.com/education/sws-poster-contest



Photo Contest "Earth Day Everyday"



Celebrate the 50th anniversary of Earth Day by entering the VASWCD 2020 Photo Contest, "Earth Day Everyday." Capture those vibrant moments and express what Earth Day Everyday looks like to you! This contest is open to any Virginia resident. Send us your works of art by July 31, 2020. Visit

www.vaswcd.org/photocontest for more details!

Loudoun SWCD
30 Catocin Circle, SE., Suite 218
Leesburg, VA 20175
www.loudounsoilandwater.org



Jennifer Venable
Education Specialist
571.918.4530 ext. 109
jennifer.venable@lswcd.org

Earth Day turned 50 on April 22...

The first Earth Day happened on April 22, 1970. Before 1970, it was not illegal for factories to unload large amounts of toxic smoke into the air, or discharge toxic waste into our waterways. Since then, a lot has improved, but we still have work to do! We can start locally by understanding how we can make an impact on a daily basis. Here are a few ideas to support our Earth:



Take a walk! To foster a love of earth in children (and adults), take a walk outside. Being outside in nature has so many positive effects on us, and these great benefits can inspire us to want to help our Earth! For younger kids – try a scavenger hunt. Make up your own, or find one online...this one is neat: www.plt.org/wp-content/uploads/pdf/PreK8_Activity_46_Schoolyard-Safari-Bingo_Michigan-PLT.pdf. For older kids and adults, really dive in to what is around you by identifying plants and critters you find. And guess what, **there is an app for that!** **Seek** (by iNaturalist) is excellent at ID'ing all things natural with a click of your smartphone camera. Download the free app and have fun figuring out what exactly you are looking at!



Practice the 3R's – Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. There are so many ways to reduce the amount of “things” we buy or use, make reuse part of our daily routine and recycle. Consider the plastic bag you just



received on your last shopping trip. Did you know you can recycle that plastic bag? Not in our curbside recycling however. Most of our single-use plastic bags do not get recycled. They often end up in our landfills, landscapes or waterways where it can take many years for them to break down. Most plastics are not biodegradable. Instead, they just keep breaking down into smaller pieces, eventually becoming microplastics. Aquatic creatures, wildlife and humans ultimately consume these particles with detrimental effects. So, think globally while acting locally by taking them to a plastic bag recycling drop-off location. Most grocery stores and larger retail stores have plastic bag drop-off inside the store. All types of plastic wrap and bags are accepted, including bags used for bread, dry cleaning, newspapers, re-closable/Ziploc bags, produce bags, bubble wrap, air pillows (found in shipped goods, make sure they are popped!), cereal bags, plastic wrap and more. Recycling information for all recyclables in our county can be found here: www.loudoun.gov/398/Recycling. To learn more, go to www.loudounsoilandwater.com/earthday



Plant native trees, grasses and plants. Native plants, trees and grasses will:

- Thrive in that region's soil, moisture and weather conditions. This saves YOU money by requiring less watering and landscape maintenance in your yard!
- Stabilize soil and decrease storm water runoff. Sediment and storm water runoff are a significant source of pollution in our waterways.



- Provide shelter and food to wildlife.
- Improve air pollution and climate change. Shrinking the size of your lawn (less to mow!) by replacing areas with natives results in less carbon from fossil fuels being burnt. They also remove (sequester) carbon from the air.
- Support the local food web of native butterflies, insects, birds and other animals by providing nectar, pollen, and seeds/nuts. Consider that in suburbia, over 90% of our land is now lawns. Lawns are desert wastelands, ecologically speaking, so they do not support our local food webs. Many plants found in suburban lawns are planted for ornamental purposes – they do not provide food for their visitors and often require insect pest control to survive. For example, many species of butterflies and moths require specific trees, grasses and plants to lay their eggs on, like



milkweed for Monarch Butterflies. Most plants sold at big box retailers are not native, and many are treated with pesticides. **To learn more about native plants in our area, go to www.loudounsoilandwater.com/earthday**



2020 SOIL AND WATER STEWARDSHIP WEEK POSTER CONTEST

Where would we BEE without Pollinators?

Pollinators form the foundations of a healthy and sustainable future for food and the environment, but in recent years, they have shown concerning signs of decline. It's important that we work to help them prosper by enhancing native pollinator habitats and protecting against pollinator declines. Designing a poster and researching the theme can give you a voice in your community on important conservation issues! Participating in our poster contest helps increase awareness about our pollinators and encourages our community to work together to protect our natural resources. **The Poster Contest is open to all Loudoun County public, private and homeschooled students in grades K—12.**

CONTEST RULES

- Any media may be used, including paint, crayon, colored pencil, charcoal, stickers, paper, or other materials.
- Posters must be hand drawn but can be any size. Originals or digital entries (photographs or scanned copies of the hand drawn posters in a JPEG format) can be submitted.
- All posters must be created by an individual student, rather than a team of students. Entry must be contestant's original creation and may not be traced from photographs or other artists' published works.
- The 2020 Stewardship theme "Where would we BEE without Pollinators?" **must** be included on the front side of each poster submission to be eligible for the national poster contest.
- Each entry **must** be submitted with an entry form to be eligible for judging. The form **must** be completed and signed by a parent or guardian. Please visit our website to download an entry form. www.loudounsoilandwater.com/education/swsw-poster-contest/
- Although younger students will most likely receive help in planning from parents or teachers, NACD encourages each student to do their own work. (Note: Entries with student handwriting and coloring will score better than those designed, drawn, and colored by adult assistance.)
- Only the local contest sponsor (Loudoun SWCD) can submit entries to the state and only the state sponsor (VASWCD) can submit for the national contest.

POSTER EVALUATION

- Conservation message (50 percent) (Poster uses correct theme)
- Visual effectiveness (30 percent)
- Originality (10 percent)
- Universal appeal (10 percent)

PRIZES

Local awards and recognition will be given. Local winners in each category will be sent to the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts. State winners will be eligible for NACD's National Poster Contest and prizes. **All poster entries should be sent to Loudoun Soil and Water Conservation District. They may be dropped off at our office or sent via County Mail Stop 95. If in JPEG format, please email to jennifer.venable@lswcd.org.**

Deadline September 15, 2020

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