

Healthy Soils Mini Grant Report for the Wyandot SWCD

The Wyandot Soil and Water Conservation District held our “Backyard Conservation Workshop” on April 26, 2014 from 9:00 am till 12:30 pm at the Gottfried Nature Center, in Upper Sandusky, Ohio.

The workshop attracted 16 participants and was held by the SWCD to promote soil health throughout the county. The district purchased six garden soil analysis kits from Acorn Naturalists and participants were asked to bring in their own soil samples to test. These samples could be taken from any location surrounding the participant’s homes.

The group sampled for the following soil nutrients: Phosphorus, Potassium, and Nitrogen. The soil samples were also evaluated for acidity levels. Participants were shown how to determine soil type and a discussion was held concerning improving each type of soil for optimum health. Chris Davis, a Soil Scientist, from the Natural Resources Conservation Service then demonstrated the differences in soil structure from a soil sample obtained from an undisturbed or un-worked area vs. an area that is continuously tilled or heavily disturbed. Chris demonstrated this by implementing a Slake Test, with two soil peds. Chris showed the participants a variety of different soils and pointed out the soil’s ability to produce healthy vegetation.

Tami Hastings, the District Conservationist, for Wyandot County discussed the usage and benefits of homeowners utilizing Cover Crops throughout their flowerbeds and gardens. Tami shared with the group the names of and benefits of various cover crop varieties. Several of the clinic participants expressed an interest in trying cover crops on their garden sites. As a future project, I would love to see if the district would be interested in selling cover crop seeds to homeowners in appropriately sized packages.

Angie Ford, SWCD Education Specialist, talked with the group about several backyard conservation topics, such as composting, rain barrels and habitat, improvement ideas which included small yard ponds and the planting of rain gardens and butterfly gardens. The district had purchased a composting barrel, for the Gottfried Nature center property to demonstrate the proper method of

composting. Clinic participants were able to observe this tool and witness the benefits of producing your own garden compost.

Angie Ford discussed the advantages of conserving water in and around the house by utilizing rain barrels. Participants were given a few calculations as to how much water they could save by utilizing rain barrels. The SWCD office also acquired a couple of food grade barrels in which we transformed into a working rain barrel.

The Wyandot SWCD office gave away a rain barrel as a door prize. The Wyandot County Solid Waste District donated a collapsible Compost Bin that was also given away as a door prize.

All of the participants that attended were very excited about the workshop and many expressed a desire to attend or bring a friend to any future Backyard Conservation Clinic that the district might hold, in the future.

Participants loved the opportunity to test their home soil samples and to talk to the soil scientist about ways to improve their soil's health.

Original plans were to have Amanda Gambey, Education Specialist for the Wood County Solid Waste District come and talk about Composting. However, due to Amanda's work schedule this was not a possibility, at this time. Therefore there was no charge for a guest speaker.

The district plans on continuing these types of clinics, every year, in the spring. We will advertise the chance for homeowners to bring a sample of soil with them and to have that sample tested, to verify the condition of their soil. Since the soil testing was a very popular aspect of this year's clinic; it is the district's goal to concentrate more on the soil structure, nutrients and organic content when advertising future clinics. Soil health will be the number one emphasis and we will limit any additional time spent on one topic. This year's clinic was jam packed with too much material and more time should have been spent on two topics versus three or four.

Next year's "Backyard Conservation Clinic" will focus on soil health and cover crops. The remaining 2014 grant balance, of twenty three dollars and ninety nine cents, will be utilized in the planning for the 2015 Backyard Conservation Clinic.

The Wyandot Soil and Water Conservation District would like to express its sincere thanks to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Soil and Water Resources for awarding our district the funds that made this new education initiative a reality.

Wyandot Soil and Water to Hold a Backyard Conservation Workshop



The Wyandot SWCD will be holding a Backyard Conservation Clinic on Saturday April 26, 2014 at the Gottfried Nature Center located on County Highway 330 west. The clinic will begin at 9 am and will conclude around 12:00 pm. A variety of topics will be covered throughout the morning.

Participants will be able to bring a sample of their backyard soil from a garden or flowerbed. The SWCD staff and guest speakers will then show the guests how to test their samples for many important soil nutrients. A few of those nutrients include: potassium, nitrogen and phosphorus.

An in depth look at soil health will be show to all participants and a general understanding of enriching poor soil will be learned. Many conservation practices that are unique to backyard conservation will be explained and demonstrated, such as:



- ◆ Composting your yard wastes
- ◆ Conserving your water
- ◆ How to provide and improve habitat for wildlife visitor's
- ◆ Rain barrels and rain gardens
- ◆ Cover crops utilization for gardens & flowerbeds



Anyone interested in attending, please notify the SWCD office by phone at 419-294-2312 or 419-294-2311. This workshop is sponsored by the Wyandot SWCD, NRCS and the Gottfried Nature Center.



Daily Chief-Union/Alleesa Paoletta

Backyard conservation

Area residents received a hands-on lesson in backyard conservation during a workshop sponsored by the Wyandot Soil and Water Conservation District and Natural Resources Conservation Service on Saturday morning at Gottfried Nature Center, Upper Sandusky. District conservationist Tammy Hastings (left) and SWCD educational specialist Angie Ford teamed up with soil scientist Chris Davis, of NRCS, to discuss the use of cover crops in gardens and other conservation techniques, such as saving rainwater for backyard planting. The local agencies plan to hold similar workshops at least once per year, Ford said. For more information on backyard conservation techniques, contact Hastings at 419-294-2311 or Ford at 419-294-2312.

Wyandot SWCD to host workshop

The Wyandot Soil and Water Conservation District will host a backyard conservation clinic April 26 at the Gottfried Nature Center, located on CH 330 west of Upper Sandusky.

The clinic will begin at 9 a.m. and conclude around noon.

A variety of topics will be covered throughout the morning.

Participants will be able to bring a sample of their backyard soil from a garden or flowerbed. SWCD staff and guest speakers will show guests how to test their samples for many important soil

nutrients, such as potassium, nitrogen and phosphorus.

Participants will get an in-depth look at soil health and a general understanding of enriching poor soil. Many conservation practices that are unique to backyard conservation will be explained and demonstrated, such as composting yard wastes, conserving water and providing and improving habitat for wildlife. Additional topics include rain barrels and gardens and cover crop utilization for gardens and flowerbeds.

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The workshop is being sponsored by Wyandot SWCD, the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the nature center.

Wyandot SWCD to host conservation workshop

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Backyard conservation workshop set for April

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The workshop is being sponsored by Wyandot SWCD, the Natural Resources Conservation Service and the nature center.

Wyandot SWCD to host new workshop

The Wyandot Soil and Water Conservation District will host a backyard conservation clinic from 9 a.m. to noon April 26 at Gottfried Nature Center, located on CH 330 West.

Participants will be able to bring a sample of their backyard soil from a garden or flowerbed and SWCD staff and guest speakers will show guests how to test their samples for many important soil nutrients.

A few of those nutrients include potassium, nitrogen and phosphorus.

An in-depth look at soil health will show participants, along with information on enriching poor soil. Many conservation practices that are unique to backyard conservation will be explained and demonstrated, such as composting yard wastes, conserving water, providing and improving habitats for wildlife, making rain barrels and rain gardens, and demonstrating crop utilization for gardens and flowerbeds.

The Wyandot County Solid Waste Management District donated a portable compost bin to be given as a door prize and the Wyandot SWCD will give away a rain barrel constructed by staff members.

Anyone interested in attending may notify the SWCD office at 419-294-2312 or 419-294-2311.

The workshop is sponsored by the Wyandot SWCD, Natural Resources Conservation Service and the Gottfried Nature Center.

Backyard Conservation Workshop - April 26, 2014 Gottfried Nature Center, Upper Sandusky, Ohio



NRCS Soil Scientist Chris Davis discusses soil health



NRCS Soil Scientist Chris Davis prepares to drop soil peds into beakers of water to conduct the Slake Test.

**Backyard Conservation Workshop - April 26, 2014
Gottfried Nature Center, Upper Sandusky, Ohio**



Soil ped on the left is from a conventional tilled field. The one on the right is from a mulch tilled field. The soil structure is falling apart in the tilled sample.

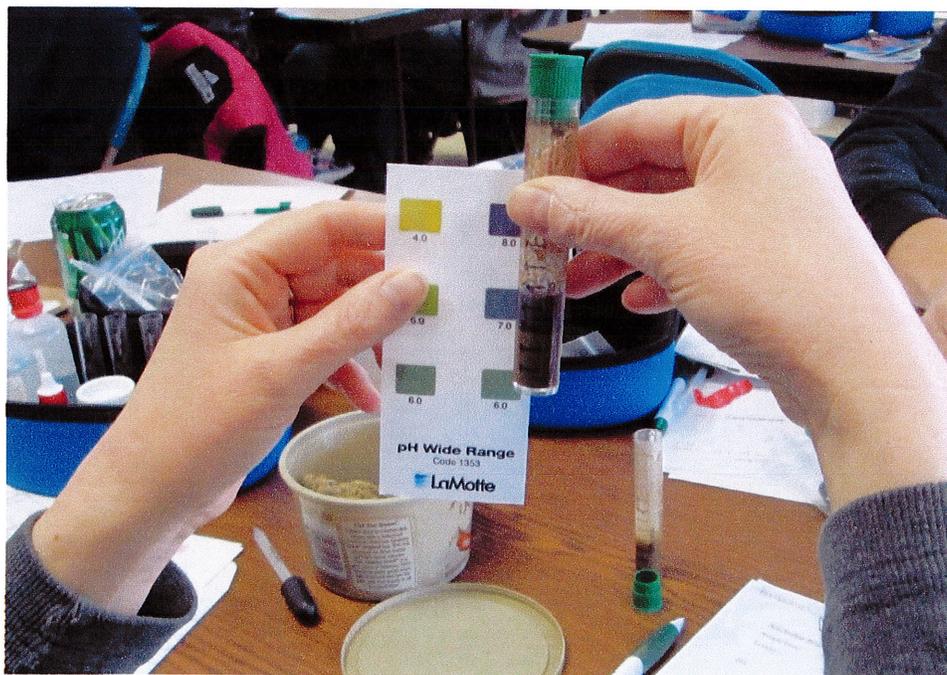


Wyandot County Commissioners Ron Metzger and Steve Sietz became soil chemists as they each tested their soil samples.

Backyard Conservation Workshop - April 26, 2014
Gottfried Nature Center, Upper Sandusky, Ohio



A garden soil sample showing the results of the Phosphorus test = medium-high



The pH shows a range between 7.0 and 8.0

Backyard Conservation Workshop - April 26, 2014
Gottfried Nature Center, Upper Sandusky, Ohio



Diane & Kevin Wintersteller prepare to test their sample



Ronda Stansbery adds solution to the test tube



Deb Mullholand is testing the pH of her soil sample

Backyard Conservation Workshop - April 26, 2014
Gottfried Nature Center, Upper Sandusky, Ohio



Dean Orians places his measured amount of soil in a tube while Linda Geary reads the instructions on how to proceed

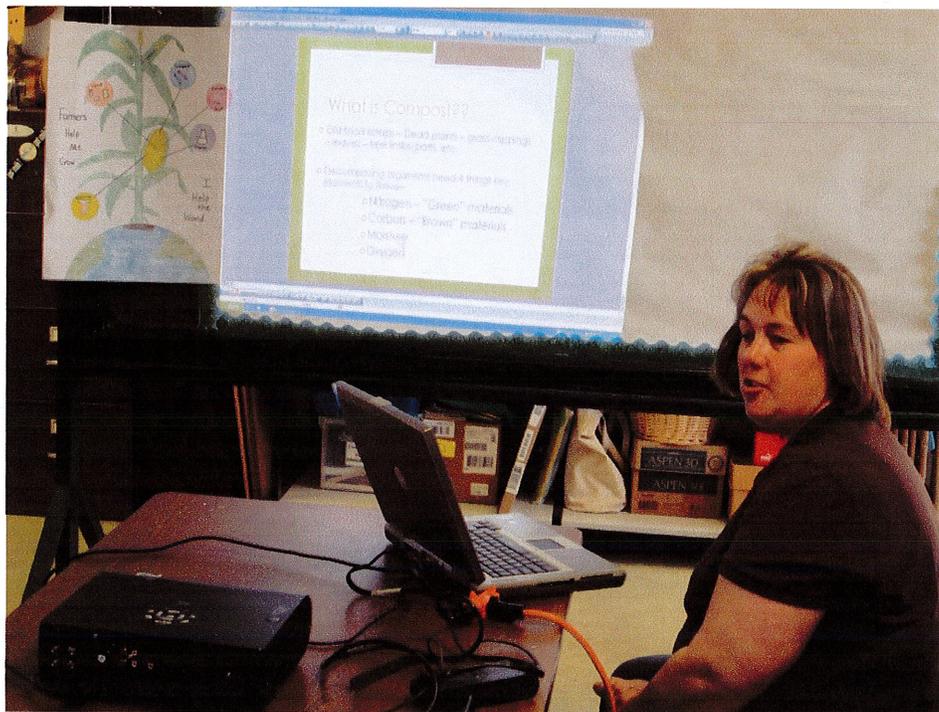


Ty & Chris Hartman are testing the pH of their sample.

Backyard Conservation Workshop - April 26, 2014 Gottfried Nature Center, Upper Sandusky, Ohio



Front: Ron & Deb Metzger, Back: Steve and Sue Seitz



Wyandot SWCD Education Specialist Angie Ford explains "what is compost"