



THE CONSERVATION CONNECTION

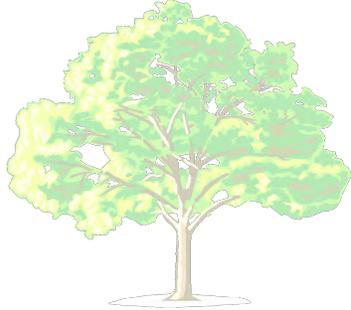
News from MCSWCD



Protecting Today, Providing Tomorrow

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Only A Few More Weeks Until You Get Your Trees & Shrubs!

The 2024 Conservation Tree & Shrub Program distribution dates are right around the corner! If you pre-ordered seedlings you must pick them up between **9am and 5pm on April 18th or April 19th** at the Monroe County **ecopark** located at **10 Avion Drive**.

Thank you to all of our customers for ordering seedlings! You're doing your part in conservation! Planting trees and shrubs reduces the amount of stormwater runoff, erosion and flooding to assist in climate resiliency, as well as providing food, protection, and homes for many birds and mammals. Not only do they provide environmental benefits, but plants also provide windbreaks, natural fences/screens, and increase property values by beautifying the landscape.

Our first-come, first-serve overstock sale will be Saturday, April 20th 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/page-8.html>.



2024 Dates & Deadlines

April 18-19
Tree & Shrub Distribution

April 20
Tree & Shrub Overstock Sale

April 27
Urban Ag Spring Conference

May 7
Envirothon

Our office will be closed May 27th for Memorial Day and June 19th for Juneteenth.

Our office will be closed to the public on April 8th due to the Total Solar Eclipse and anticipated increased traffic volume

IMPORTANT TREE & SHRUB PROGRAM DATES & TIMES

Tree & Shrub Distribution	4/18 & 4/19 (9 am - 5 pm)
Overstock Sale	4/20 (9 am - 11 am)

Spring Fish Stocking Program Open for Ordering!

The District will be offering a fish stocking program distribution on **May 3, 2024 at 12:00pm** (noon) located at our office at 145 Paul Road, Rochester. The program is **PRE-ORDER** only.

All pre-orders with payment must be received by April 29th.

The order form, full catalog of species, online ordering store, and various permits, can also be found on our website at: <https://www.monroecountyswcd.org/page-9.html>

Note: A Fillable Spring Fish Stocking Order Form can be found on the last page of this newsletter.

This program assists Monroe County residents in stocking their ponds for recreational fishing purposes or for managing nuisance plants, fish, or insects. Since fish cannot be collected from the wild and stocked into another waterbody due to potential for spreading diseases, the fish are from a licensed commercial fish hatchery to ensure fish being released into the water are certified disease-free from harmful pathogens. Considerations before stocking your pond should include habitat, temperature, depth, and water quality. For more information on improving the overall health and environment of your pond, please visit our pond page for useful management information and links:



<https://monroecountyswcd.org/page-5.html> Questions? Call us at (585) 753-7380.

Attention: if you plan to purchase **Triploid Grass Carp**, a permit is required. **You must submit your permit with your order or it cannot be processed.**

Permit application can be found at the link below:

<https://www.monroecountyswcd.org/Forms/Fish/grasscarppermitappl.pdf>

I Purchased Grass Carp Years Ago, But I Have Nuisance Plants Again! What Gives!?

Triploid grass carp (*Ctenopharyngodon idella*) are commonly introduced to ponds due to their ability to control a variety of aquatic vegetative species. Stocking triploid grass carp has proven to be a viable solution against an over abundance of nuisance aquatic plants as they are strictly herbivorous. Additionally, unlike other grass carp species, triploid grass carp are sterile and cannot reproduce. This ensures that the carp do not take over your pond themselves. They also only feed on vegetation, ensuring no direct impact on other pond organisms such as insects, mollusks, and other fish species.

As triploid grass carp get older, their metabolism slows and they become less efficient at removing vegetation as they do not eat near the volume when first stocked. In fact, it is likely that older carp are releasing nutrients that lead to more vegetation than they are able to consume now.

If it has been several years since you purchased grass carp and you notice the return of over abundant vegetation in may be time to re-stock your pond.

Note that it is also important to not stock too many triploid grass carp as too many can easily eradicate all present vegetation

Upcoming Agricultural Events

Monroe County Farmland Protection Plan Meeting

Monroe County is updating its Agricultural & Farmland Protection Plan. The plan will recommend ways to preserve high quality farmland and support the continued economic viability of agriculture in the county.

Farms, farmland owners, and interested community members are invited to participate in one of three public forums:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Learn about the update to the County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan. ➤ Share your perspective on how the County can support agriculture and protect farmland. 	
<h3>PUBLIC WORKSHOPS</h3>	<p><i>Members of the public are welcome to attend. Registration is only required for the virtual workshop.</i></p>	
<p>West Side March 26th 6:00-7:00p.m. Ogden Town Hall 269 Ogden Center Road</p>	<p>East Side March 27th 6:00-7:00p.m. Pittsford Community Center 35 Lincoln Avenue</p>	
<p>Virtual Workshop March 27th 12:00-1:00p.m.</p>		<p>For more information, please contact: Barbara Johnston Senior Planner LaBella Associates, 585-295-6636</p>
<p>See link at www.monroecountyagplan.com</p>		<p>Patrick Gooch Senior Associate Planner Monroe County, 585-753-2032</p>  <p>ADAM J. BELLO COUNTY EXECUTIVE</p>

To register for the ZOOM session and/or to stay up-to-date on the Plan’s progress, findings, events, or to sign up and receive Plan notifications please visit the Farmland Protection website:

www.monroecountyagplan.com

Urban Agriculture

The District is excited to once again participate in the annual Spring Urban Agriculture Conference on April 27th at Edison Career & Tech High School!

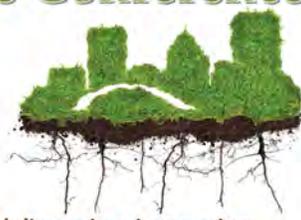
Last year, District staff met lots of urban growers and fellow organizations supporting urban agriculture, along with taking part in various workshops and tabling.

Come meet urban growers of Rochester, NY and engage in panel discussions, workshops, and more this spring.

For more details and to register for this event, please visit their Eventbrite website: [REGISTER HERE](#)

SAVE THE DATE!

2024 Spring Urban Agriculture Conference



Saturday, April 27 9am - 3pm
Edison Career & Tech High School
655 Colfax St
Rochester, NY 14606

Featuring: Hands-on workshops, a panel discussion, interactive tables, & more!

Rochester welcomes keynote speaker Qiana Mickie,
Executive Director of NYC Mayor’s Office of Urban Ag!



Full event schedule and registration to follow

HOSTED BY:


 Cornell Cooperative Extension
 Monroe County


**Urban Agriculture
Working Group**


 MONROE COUNTY
 SOIL & WATER
 CONSERVATION DISTRICT

 Follow us on Instagram @rocurbanagriculture & like us on Facebook at facebook.com/RocUAWG 

Benefits of Adding Your Farmland to an Agricultural District

Do you own farmland in Monroe County? Is that farmland currently enrolled in an agricultural district? In 1971, state legislature was enacted to protect and promote the availability of land for farming purposes. This led to the creation of agricultural districts. An agricultural district is a geographic area that predominately consists of viable agricultural land. Agricultural operations within an agricultural district are the priority land use and afforded benefits and protections to promote the continuation of farming and the preservation of agricultural land. Properties enrolled in an agricultural district must remain in agricultural use for five years, while properties not enrolled must remain in agricultural use for eight years.

To enroll your property in an agricultural district within Monroe County you must file it during the enrollment period, which can be found on the New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets' website: <https://agriculture.ny.gov/land-and-water/about-agricultural-districts>

Agricultural Best Management Practice Highlight: Hedgerows

As farmland continues to grow in New York state and farm equipment becomes larger in size, many farm operations will often connect many small crop fields into one large field for more efficient farming and producing larger crops. However, hedgerows are an important conservation practice that produce many benefits when kept as a part of the agricultural landscape.

When present in an agricultural landscape, hedgerows serve in the following ways:



- Reduce erosion from surface water runoff via breaking up slope length
- Reduce wind erosion in open cropland
- Provide habitat, cover, and corridors for terrestrial wildlife, birds, and pollinators
- Provide food for terrestrial wildlife
- Provide critical nesting habitat for birds and pollinators
- Provide food, cover, and shade for aquatic organisms that live in adjacent waterways
- Provide substrate for beneficial invertebrate species as a component of integrated pest management (IPM)
- Intercept airborne particulate matter before it reaches neighboring residential or other non-agricultural properties
- Reduce chemical drift or odor movement
- Provide screens and barriers to agricultural noise and dust
- Increase carbon sequestration and storage in the biomass and soil

Stormwater Runoff



There is no doubt this has been a different winter than we are used to here in Monroe County. Temperatures have gone from high 60's to a single digit wind chill in the span of 24 hours. While spring does not officially start until March 19th, spring weather has been present all winter long. In normal winters, the ground would be frozen for quite some time, resulting in impervious surfaces where the water cannot infiltrate. This leads to what is known as “first flush,” where once spring arrives, snow and surface waters warm up faster than the frozen soils, causing high rates of runoff. Due to the mild weather, we have had multiple “first flush” events throughout winter and some were paired with rain events causing higher than normal stormwater runoff amounts resulting in localized flooding.

Besides flooding though, of what concern are these large runoff events? As with any form of stormwater or precipitation, snowmelt can also pick up various pollutants, excess nutrients, and road salts. Unlike rain or stormwater, however; snow tends to accumulate these pollutants and store them until warming occurs. Then, during the warming period, all of the stored pollutants from the snow run off from impervious surfaces into our streams, lakes, and other water bodies.

The following are some practices that can be utilized to help reduce the amount of accumulation of pollutants in our snow piles and reduce the snow melt and spring stormwater runoff reaching our streams and lakes and other water bodies:

- **Limit your salt application (or use alternatives)** - While not really an issue since late January given the lack of snow since then, salt can be harmful to drinking water supplies and can alter the ecology of a water body making it harmful to plants and aquatic life. Using less salt or more environmentally friendly alternatives can help. Another good option is shoveling more frequently so salt is not required.
- **Plan for snow storage** - As previously mentioned, pollutants accumulate in our shoveled and plowed snow piles. As best as possible, try to store snow piles away from storm sewers and green infrastructure practices (raingardens, etc.) and keep them in grassy areas where they can infiltrate as it melts and the ground thaws.
- **Direct downspouts away from impervious surfaces** - Direct gutters and downspouts away from impervious surfaces like your driveway, walkways, or the street. Instead direct them to vegetated areas like your lawn or garden. This way the runoff from spring rains will be absorbed instead of entering our streams and lakes.
- **Always pick up pet waste** - Pet waste is often an overlooked source of harmful bacteria. The cooler temperatures and frozen ground delay the decaying process and during spring time can act as a large source of harmful nutrients and bacteria in melting snow and runoff. These nutrients and bacteria can find their way into waterbodies, having a negative impact to the water quality.



Climate change is expected to increase the severity of unusual seasonal weather, likely leading to more rain on snow events, heavy rain events in place of snow resulting in more flooding, and a more volatile freeze thaw cycle throughout winter. That's why implementing these practices you can help protect our water quality and stop pollutants, excess nutrients and litter from being washed by stormwater and into streams, lakes, and other waterbodies.

Determining Your Property's Water Table

As noted in the stormwater article on Page 5, Monroe County saw elevated water levels leading to localized flooding due to several days of abnormally high temperatures and large amounts of rain, all while we went through a snowmelt event... in January. Many landowners likely had standing water in their yards for quite some time, especially if you live near a stream or wetland, or have poorly-draining soils present on your property. Those landowners also likely experience standing water in their yards during the same timeframe each year, or after any sort of rain event.

The water levels are due to your changing water table. Your water table is the boundary underground between what are known as the saturated and unsaturated zones. The soil above your water table is the unsaturated zone where the spaces between soil particles are filled with oxygen and water, whereas the saturated zone beneath the water table only has water filling those spaces. This zone is also commonly referred to as groundwater. Water tables are typically higher in the spring when everything is thawing and snow is melting, along with the increased amounts of rain. This is typically the case for the fall as well when rain events increase. During summer months, when weather is drier and trees are actively soaking up water before it reaches the water table, the water table lowers resulting in less standing water and drier conditions.

To determine the depth to water table of your property, there is a very useful online tool, the Web Soil Survey: <https://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/app/> Those with a lower depth to water table will be at less risk of prolonged periods of standing water on their property.

The Web Soil Survey can also be used for many other soil analyses of your property.



Youth Environmental Education Volunteers Needed!



The annual Envirothon is being held May 7th 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://www.monroecountyswcd.org/page-21.html>

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.

Have You Seen Any of These Signs of Spring Yet?



The first true sign spring is on its way is the emergence of skunk cabbage (*Symplocarpus foetidus*). Uniquely able to produce its own heat, skunk cabbage is able to poke through the snow or ice come late February/ early March and melt the remaining snow to begin growing, sometimes reaching 30 degrees higher than the surrounding air temperature. The mottled maroon/yellow spikes of the plant protect the flowers inside. Skunk Cabbage releases an odor similar to rotting meat to attract the earliest emerging pollinators like gnats, flies, and carrion beetles. This plant grows in wet, mucky soils, commonly found in wetlands, forests, bogs, and stream edges.

Next up is the Red-winged Blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*). A common sight around wetlands, Red-winged Blackbird males are one of our earliest arriving migrants starting around late February/early March. The males arrive early to secure the best breeding site in the hopes of attracting the later arriving females. Females choose their mate based on the best breeding site. The calls of male blackbirds perched high on the cattails and reeds of wetlands is a sure sign that spring is just around the corner!



Finally, we have the wood frog (*Lithobates sylvaticus*). Wood frogs are incredible amphibians who have the unique ability to partially freeze themselves during the winter. Water flowing out of the internal organs of the frog form a protective layer of ice, while the glucose in the body act as antifreeze keeping cells from freezing during winter. Similar to spring peepers, starting in March, warm weather triggers Wood Frog emergence and the start of breeding. This is best characterized by their mating call - similar to quieter, continuous quacking to attract mates.

Wait, did we forgot robins?? Not quite. Long used as the first sign of spring, American Robins (*Turdus migratorius*) are actually present in Monroe County all winter long. While some robins do migrate south, quite a bit actually stay and congregate together around areas with berry-producing plants. This results in them being seen a lot less as they are not exploring breeding grounds and looking for different food sources as they do in spring and summer.



**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



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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.



MONROE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

145 Paul Road, Building #5, Rochester, NY 14624 Phone: (585)753-7380

<http://www.monroecountyswcd.org>

2024 SPRING FISH STOCKING PROGRAM

SCHEDULED DISTRIBUTION is Friday May 3rd, 2024 at 12:00 p.m.

All orders must be received with payment by Friday April 26th.

Distribution will be at the Monroe County Soil & Water Conservation Office (address above). We have no holding facilities.

PLEASE ARRIVE PROMPTLY AT 12PM. NO REFUNDS FOR ORDERS NOT PICKED UP.

PLEASE READ:

- 1) You will need to bring **20 gallons of pond or lake water** for every 6 Grass Carp, 500 minnows, 75 Perch, 6 Catfish, 50 Bass, 50 Black Crappie. **Do NOT use tap water!**
- 2) Recommended travel time should not exceed 30-45 minutes.
Aquarium aerators can be used to decrease stressors to fish during transport.
- 3) **Please bring a cover for the container(s) of water in order to reduce risk of fish loss or water loss.**
A garbage bag with a tie is acceptable if you do not have a container with an appropriate lid.
- 4) Additional information to consider before ordering specific species or items can be found on the next page.
You NEED a Triploid Grass Carp permit to buy carp. See next page how to obtain a permit.
- 5) Online ordering is available at <https://monroe-county-soil-and-water-conservation-district.square.site/fish-stocking-program> Credit card payments are also accepted over the phone at (585)753-7380.

PLEASE SEND YOUR GRASS CARP PERMIT (3 copies) WITH YOUR ORDER

OR a copy can be sent via email to mcswcd@monroecounty.gov

(Retain a photocopy for your records). This will enable us to expedite the distribution of your order.

You will receive a signed copy with your grass carp the day of distribution.

NO PERMIT=NO GRASS CARP

*The Soil & Water Conservation District is **not** responsible for fish after they leave the pick-up area.*

----- ✂ ----- ✂ ----- **CUT HERE** ----- ✂ --- ✂ ----- ✂ ----- ✂ -----

Please complete form, detach and return with payment to the address at the top of the page.

Name: _____ Address: _____

Daytime Phone #: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

<u>Fish Species</u>	<u>Length</u>	<u>Rate per Acre</u>	<u>Price</u>		<u>Quantity Ordered</u>	<u>Price</u>
			<u>Each</u>	<u>Per/25</u>		
Triploid Grass Carp	10-14"	Set by DEC	\$30			\$
Fathead Minnows	2-3"	2,000	\$20 per ½ lb. <small>(½ lb. = approximately 75 minnows)</small>			\$
Yellow Perch	3-5"	50	\$8	\$98		\$
Largemouth Bass	3-5"	50	\$8	\$98		\$
Bluegill	3-5"	50	\$7	\$85		\$
Black Crappie	3-5"	12	\$8	\$98		\$
Fish Food 5 lb. bag	--		\$15			\$
Fish Food 10 lb. bag	--		\$30			\$
Fish Food 44 lb. bag	--		\$73			\$
Total:						\$

Credit card refunds will be subject to a 5% administrative fee deducted from the total amount of purchase.

(Sales Tax is already included)

****Please consider the following additional information below before ordering these species or items.**

Additional Information:

➤ **Grass Carp Orders - You NEED a Triploid Grass Carp permit to buy carp.**

If you do not have a permit, call the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS-DEC), Fisheries Office at (585) 226-5343 to obtain an application or download the form from the NYS-DEC at: https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/fish_marine_pdf/grasscarpstockap.pdf.

The form is also available on our Fish Program webpage: <https://monroecountyswcd.org/page-9.html>

Triploid Grass Carp control aquatic vegetation by consuming various types of soft stemmed rooted plants. Grass Carp will NOT control algae. Customers have been known to successfully use barley straw to reduce algae growth. For more information visit our website.

- Unfortunately **Barley Straw** is NOT available through our 2024 Fish Stocking Program due to a lack of local supply. Barley Straw can be used as a more natural preventative practice to minimize the potential for algae growth in ponds. Note that if you use barley straw to help reduce algae growth, it is best to put the straw in the pond as early as possible in the spring before algae starts to grow. Contact our District if you need help determining how much barley straw you will need for your pond.
- You may obtain a free Farm Fish Pond License to stock fish by calling the NYS-DEC Fisheries Office at: (585) 226-5343. Permits are good for 5 years. This form is also available on the District website.
- Koi are no longer offered at our Fish Stocking Event. Koi are now listed as a regulated invasive species in New York State due to their harmful impacts on native populations in natural waterbodies. Please feel free to contact our office for suggestions on similar functional replacements for your pond.
- Additional information about fish needs and other items offered is available in our Fish Program Catalog: <https://monroecountyswcd.org/page-9.html>
- Of course as always, fish sizing and availability may vary depending on yearly weather conditions.