

Conservation Connection

Bonus Edition 2023

Tree Sale Updates & Changes

Kelly Crout, District Director

While Butler SWCD has offered a tree sale for about 50+ years, there have been changes throughout those years. Most recently, we went from partnering with a few other counties, to last year just doing it by ourselves. Overall, it went really well and this year Butler SWCD has decided again to hold the sale by ourselves. However, after reflecting, we thought some changes should be made. Changes to hopefully make it easier on us and on you as the purchaser. Hence, the bonus edition of our newsletter, which will provide you with all of the changes we plan on making for our 2024 tree sale.

What's the change? Well, the biggest change is that we will not have any online purchasing of trees. While online can be convenient, it can also cause a lot of issues when things don't go right; inventory isn't updated, customers from other states try to order, or the nursery can't fulfill a certain species. So, this year, you will have the option to "reserve" your trees. This means that you can reserve what trees you would like, but you won't have to pay until you pick up the trees during the designated dates in April. That way, you are only paying for the species you actually receive. We will have a Google Form for you to fill out to "reserve" your tree order. This option will be available from February 1 to February 29, 2024.

Once the reserve dates are closed, then anyone who would like to purchase trees may come to our official tree sale, which will take place April 10 - 11. During the tree sale, all reserved trees and trees purchased those days must be purchased with cash or check only.

Also, inside this bonus edition you will find highlights, upcoming tree workshops, and other useful information regarding all things trees. And don't worry, we will also have this information in our January newsletter as well. Happy Holidays and we will see you in 2024!



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Species Spotlight

Dakotah Zimmer, Natural Resource Tech

Here at Butler SWCD we are preparing for our Annual Native Tree Sale in April 2024! This year, we have 19 different native tree and shrub species available for reservation and in-person purchase. So let's highlight a few of the species that will be a part of our 2024 Tree & Shrub Sale.

Coralberry

A lesser known native shrub, Coralberry (*Syphoricarpos orbiculatus*) is a great alternative to plant than the abundant and invasive Amur Honeysuckle, or Bush Honeysuckle. Coralberry and Amur Honeysuckle look incredibly similar, being in the same family (Caprifoliaceae). So why should you plant



Coralberry instead of letting Honeysuckle persist in your yard? Amur Honeysuckle provides minimal resources to native wildlife and greatly impacts the growth of surrounding native vegetation. Coralberry, being native to most of the Midwest, is an excellent food source, pollinator attractor, and habitat for many wildlife species.

Apart from Coralberry's ecological value, it can also be aesthetically pleasing in native landscapes. During the growing season, Coralberry leaves are bright green, fading yellow, and then red in the fall and winter moths. Coralberry blooms white-green flowers from April to September. The ripened berries present a stunning coralpink color during the fall, and persist on the branches for a much appreciated pop of color during the winter months.

Coralberry also has and interesting red-brown shredded bark, which can add color and texture to your landscape during the winter. This native shrub is easily adaptable to moist or dry soils and can tolerate partial sun to shady garden edges. In optimal conditions, Coralberry can grow up to 4ft tall and 6ft wide, providing ample wildlife cover and a natural privacy for homeowners.

Bald Cypress

The Bald Cypress (*Taxodium distichum*) is among one of the most interesting native tree species in our area, not only for its stunning fall color, but for its given name too. Bald Cypress trees are categorized as deciduous conifers, or conifers with deciduous behavior. Most needle trees, conifers, hold onto their needles during the winter, appearing ever-green, while deciduous trees drop their leaves. However, the Bald Cypress tree will drop its needle-like leaves, appearing "bald" during the winter months.

Like most conifers, the Bald Cypress produces catkins and cones, and can reproduce from just one tree. Bald Cypress 2

trees present green needles during the growing season that then turn to a stunning autumnal orange/brown during the fall. The catkins and cones turn from green to dark purples from October to December, and usually persist on the branches throughout the winter.

The Bald Cypress is said to be one of the longest living trees in North America, as some of the oldest specimens have been



dated to be over 2,000 years old! Although in the South it is most commonly found near or in swampy waters, the Bald Cypress is very well adapted to almost any soil type and full sun to partial shade conditions. Allow for ample growing space as this ever-lasting, unique tree can grow up to 75ft tall and 30ft wide in the right growing conditions.

American Sycamore

The American Sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*) tree is considered to be one of the largest native trees in the eastern U.S. In Ohio, the largest recorded diameter of an American Sycamore tree measures at 42ft wide! The American sycamore is a fast-growing, water-loving tree.

The bark of American Sycamore trees is interesting and easy to identify, even as a novice naturalist. Mature Sycamore bark



presents as a peeling camouflage pattern, with white, green, and brown mottling most prominent in the upper canopy. Sycamore leaves turn from dark green to brown in the fall, and can be mistaken for large Maple leaves. While the American Sycamore can produce butterscotch-like syrup when tapped, they are unrelated to the common Maple tree. American Sycamores produce male (yellow) and female (red) flowers on a single tree that then develop into brown seed balls.

Various native bird and bat species benefit from the American Sycamore, as the tree provides food and habitat with its abundance of seed balls and natural trunk cavities. The fast-growing American Sycamore can adapt to most soil types and sun exposure conditions, but the tree is commonly found along stream banks and in floodplains. When planting an American Sycamore, be sure to consider ample amount of growing space, as in optimal growing conditions, the tree can reach up to 100ft in height and 10ft in width.

Stream Bank Erosion Dakotah Zimmer, Natural Resource Tech



Signs of stream bank erosion can include exposed roots, steep undercut banks, and bare soils.

If you live next to a stream, you might notice erosion occurring along the banks. Stream bank erosion can easily be mitigated through planting native species along failing banks to help hold soils together. Plant species native to your region are important to use in erosion mitigation, as native plants have specifically evolved to adapt to their regional conditions. Compared to non-native species, native plants have stronger root systems, which aid in stabilizing and strengthening eroding stream banks. Native trees, shrubs, and grasses are easy to plant, cost effective for homeowners, and establish themselves quickly with minimal future maintenance.

The list provided suggests twelve native trees, shrubs, and grasses to plant to reduce stream bank erosion. These native species have adapted to tolerate conditions such as wet soils and steep slopes, while still maintaining aesthetic value to homeowners. Six of the twelve listed native species will be available for purchase at the Butler SWCD Annual Tree & Shrub Sale in April 2024 (*available at Tree Sale). These six species are highlighted within to aid homeowners in selecting the right species for their property.

Trees:

- American Sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*) *
- Bald Cypress (Taxodium distichum)*
- Eastern Cottonwood (Populus deltoids)

Shrubs:

- Grey-twig Dogwood (Cornus racemose) *
- Buttonbush (Cephalanthus occidentalis) *
- Arrowwood (Viburnum dentatum) *
- Common Elderberry (Sambucus canadensis)

- Pussy Willow (Salix discolor)
- Common Ninebark (*Physocarpos opulifolius*) *

Grasses:

- Little Bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*)
- Sideoats Gramma (Bouteloua curtipendula)
- River Cane (Arundinaria gigantean)

The native trees listed are better suited to plant within floodplains, rather than on sloped stream banks. Trees planted in floodplains can be beneficial to overall stream health, as deep roots help filter water pollutants before reaching the stream and reduce flooding events.

Native shrubs are more suitable to plant along stream bank slopes, as shrubs don't require as much growing space as trees, yet still provide stabilization and protection against stream bank erosion.

Grey-twig Dogwoods are a common native landscaping shrub, but are becoming more frequently used in stream bank erosion mitigation practices. The Grev-twig Dogwood can grow up to 15ft tall and can create root suckers, forming soil stabilizing thickets along streams. Buttonbush can grow up to 20ft tall and is most often found in wet soils, making it easy to establish and grow along stream banks. Along with its preferable growing conditions, Buttonbush produces white puffball-like flowers making for an interesting landscape design element. Arrowwood is a small (only growing up to 10ft tall), yet hardy shrub that requires minimal maintenance after establishment. Arrowwood most commonly creates colonies through rook suckering, making it easy and cost effective to implement into stream bank erosion mitigation. **Common Ninebark** is a small yet fast-growing shrub, growing up to 2ft per year until reaching a mature height of 10ft. Ninebark presents a red/ brown layered, shredded bark and sweet-smelling, white flower clusters.

Although grasses seem as though they would not play an important role in soil stabilization and erosion control, some native grasses can have root systems as deep as 12ft. Native grasses can act as cover crop, wildlife habitat, and soil stabilization.

Tree & Shrub Species Workshop

Date: Monday, January 29 Time: 6 - 8 PM Location: Butler SWCD Office, 1802 Princeton Road, Hamilton, 45011

Learn about the tree species we have in the 2024 Tree & Shrub Sale, their preferred growing conditions, the wildlife that depends upon them, and much more. We will also cover how to plant and care for bare-root tree seedlings.



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Southwest Ohio Woodland Association

Brady Smith, Rural Specialist

Many years ago, there was an organization created for individuals who had enrolled in the Ohio Tree Farm program called the Southwest Ohio Tree Farmers. The primary mission of this organization was "to promote the growing of renewable forest resources on private land while protecting environmental



benefits and increasing public understanding of all benefits of productive forests."

As time went on this organization went defunct, however many active tree farms and people interested in forestry remained. Fast forward to 2022, the newly reformed group, renamed themselves the Southwest Ohio Woodland Owners Association (SWOWA).

SWOWA meets quarterly with short presentations often followed by forest walks or other demonstrations. We are always looking for new members, topics, and workshop locations. If SWOWA sounds like the group for you please contact Randy Evans at Three Valley Conservation Trust by email, Director@3vct.org, and request to be added to the email list.

Butler SWCD is hosting the first quarterly meeting on January 21, for more information please visit our website.

Upcoming Events

- BEST Volunteer, Seed Packing: January 11
- SWOWA Meeting: January 21
- Ag Outlook Meeting: January 25
- Tree & Shrub Species Workshop: January 29
- 2024 Tree & Shrub Sale Reservations: February 1 29
- BEST Volunteer, Bat Boxes: February 29
- National Ag Day Breakfast: March 19
- HOA Workshop: March 23

To find out more information on any upcoming events, please visit *www.butlerswcd.org* or call our office at (513) 887-3720.



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