

Speaking up for moles (continued on back page)

Although their eyesight is dim, their hearing and sense of smell are so acute that they can detect prey through many inches of soil. They have large, powerful, outward-pointing front legs and claws for pushing dirt aside as they “swim” through soft, moist earth. They are able to disappear from rare ventures to the surface in 10 seconds flat, to tunnel 1 foot in 3 minutes and to run through established tunnels at about 80 feet per minute. Their short, velvety fur is non-directional, causing little resistance as they move rapidly through tunnels. (Their soft, dense pelts once supported a thriving moleskin industry.) Moles can survive in their low-oxygen environment underground because they can tolerate the high carbon dioxide levels in the exhaled air they reuse. Their saliva paralyzes prey, which they store, still alive, in underground “larders” for future consumption. Moles can detect, capture, and eat their prey faster than the human eye can follow.



Eastern mole

Moles make 2 types of tunnels: feeding runways close to the surface where the molehills pop up and permanent tunnels about a foot or more underground, leading to a nest about 2 feet deep. What might look like the work of many moles can be the product of one busy tunneler.

Moles are solitary and highly territorial, coming together only to mate. Breeding season runs from February to May. From 2 to 5 pups are born after a 1-month gestation, and leave the nest 30 to 45 days later in search of their own territories. Although tunnels may overlap, moles avoid each other and will attack and even fight to the death when they meet.

Many online gardening experts write about moles in terms of their being destructive pests that must be eradicated. They suggest many methods of doing so: poisons; traps that choke, spear, slice or confine for removal; buried repellants like broken glass, razor blades, or thorny branches; or natural, more humane repellants like plantings that smell bad to moles (daffodils, alliums, marigolds, castor beans, etc.), castor oil drenches; and reducing lawn watering that could force moles close to the surface.

However, I lean toward a smaller set of gardening experts represented online who believe that moles are more beneficial than destructive. Rather than taking offense at molehills, they point out that moles improve soil by loosening, aerating and fertilizing, and the cones subside quickly. Any soil that has been lifted off roots can be pressed down again with a foot. Moles receive the blame for plant damage caused by chipmunks, mice and voles, and generally receive little credit for destroying lawn grubs. I myself would rather let moles eat pesky soil-dwelling larvae than chase moles out by spreading harmful poisons to kill the grubs. In the view of one expert, Roger Mercer, “Moles aren’t all bad. In fact they’re 99% good.” As a 15th century saying goes: “Do not make a mountain out of a mole hill.”



A grass plant with roots eaten by grubs (right) compared to undamaged grass plants

—**The Gardener at The Quarry Farm**



Give (or get) a perfect gift

Exclusive Quarry Farm mugs, designed by Continental artist Brandon Knott, are fresh from the kiln and ready for purchase. The mugs are **\$20 each** and are glazed in a variety of colors. Complete the order form below and send, with cash or check, to:

The Quarry Farm Nature Preserve & Conservation Farm
14321 Road 7L
Pandora, OH 45877

Proceeds from the sale of the mugs benefit educational programs and animal care.

Name

Mailing Address (street or PO box)

City/State/Zip Code

Phone Number:

How many mugs? _____

What colors do you prefer? (list 3):

Amount enclosed: \$ _____

Please include \$2.00 for shipping per mug. Local delivery is available.

Board of Directors:
Laura Coburn, President
Randy Basinger
Erin Fitch
Tim Macke
Phyllis Macke
Paul Nusbaum
Rita Seitz

Advisory Board Members:
Bonnie Brooks
Kevin Siefker
Alaina Brinkman Siefker

Questions? Call 419-384-7195, email thequarryfarm@gmail.com or visit us online at www.thequarryfarm.org.

Donations to The Quarry Farm Nature Preserve & Conservation Farm, a 501(c)3 public charity, are tax-deductible.





Mission Statement

It is our goal and mission to provide the opportunity for people of all ages to increase their understanding of the natural environment of Northwest Ohio and to interact with their fellow inhabitants in a sustainable manner.



Red Fox Cabin in snow

The Quarry Farm Newsletter is a quarterly publication for supporters of The Quarry Farm Nature Preserve & Conservation Farm, a nonprofit organization in Pandora, Ohio.

On the cover: A flying squirrel perches beside the quarry.

All photographs printed in this newsletter were taken on The Quarry Farm Nature Preserve & Conservation Farm.

www.thequarryfarm.org

Printed on recycled, recyclable paper

Under one big sky

As we look back on summer and fall and ready for a new year of programs and events, we thank Joyce Seitz. On August 24, this Quarry Farm founder died at age 100. Because she and her husband Carl valued the black walnut, maple and oak trees that grow on these 50 acres, the dogtooth violets, mayapples, bloodroot and spring beauties on the ridge and in the floodplain—because they were educators and dreamers—The Quarry Farm Nature Preserve & Conservation Farm is here.

The 4th Annual Quarry Farm Jam happened on September 9. Whether you played an instrument like a virtuoso or just like to pretend, sing along or listen, everyone was invited to spend a sweet late summer evening with music under the big red roof alongside the calls from the nature preserve. There were cookies, too. Watch the video at www.thequarryfarm.org/2017/09/25/falling-sounds.

Just two fat, cold drops fell as Phil Seitz gave The Quarry Farm 5K participants the go on October 7. As runners and walkers approached the first downhill, the clouds parted for blue. By the time first-place finishers Mark Hahn (23:40) and Rachel Schroeder (27:13) came back up that slope, a sweet breeze blew in from the southwest, just enough to dry sweat worked up after 3.2 miles.

Thanks to Ted's Market for water, and to Paula Harper for making sure it was distributed at the turnaround and to Phyllis Seitz for passing more bottles out at the finish. Bananas and homemade cookies further refreshed as the event winners received their medals and Brandon Knott-designed mugs.

Everyone got a pumpkin for autumn, courtesy of Mike Erchenbrecher.

Speaking up for moles

Not long ago after autumn rains had softened the baked lawn around Red Fox Cabin, little volcano-shaped mounds erupted here and there, heralding the arrival of moles. Moles don't alarm me because their burrowing hasn't seemed to cause lasting damage in the garden. However, convinced that the humans on a nature preserve should be knowledgeable about their fellow inhabitants, I went online to learn more about moles.

Members of the family *Talpidae*, moles are found in most parts of North America, Europe and Asia. Seven species live in the U.S., the Eastern Mole being common in our region. They are 5 to 7 inches long, larger than shrews and voles. Males are called *boars*; females are *sows*; and the young are *pups*. A group is a *labor* (perhaps because they are so industrious?). They are carnivores, not herbivores. Their diet is primarily earthworms, grubs, and the occasional mouse, but not our garden plants. Once they have eaten the food in one area, they move on.

Moles are amazingly adapted to a subterranean life. They can distinguish light from dark but not colors.



The 2017 Jam included variety of singers and songs, including "Hang on, Sloop".



Rachel Schroeder and Mark Hahn

Volunteer Spotlight Holiday

The farm animal sanctuary on The Quarry Farm includes approximately 4 acres of land, all surrounded by fencing. While the fence and gates are necessary to keep the animals and neighboring gardens safe and secure, they are also walls that need dressing-up now and then. Our Mission Statement includes "provide the opportunity for people of all ages to increase their understanding of the natural environment" and one of the ways we do so is through the promoting and teaching about art in nature.

In 2016, several 3' x 3' boards were hung on the length of fence that faces Road 7L. The gallery included a work by volunteer Sandy Downing. That painting of a red fox is now The Quarry Farm's Facebook profile image.

In 2017, the work of young local artist Holiday Herman will be featured. Throughout the colder winter months, her aerial view of the Mississippi River will be on display for visitors and passers-by. Holiday's subject is appreciated; everything that happens here affects all things downstream, even the most major waterways.



Holiday Herman at her easel

Winter 2017–2018 Programs & Events

Hat Day Hike

Sunday, January 14, 2 to 3 p.m.

Meet in Seitz Family Pavilion, 1/8 mile north of 14321 Road 7L, Pandora

More body heat is lost from your head than other parts of the body. National Hat Day (January 15) is not intended to just keep your noggin warm. It's a chance to make a statement and to display your favorite headgear. In celebration, join us the day before for a nature hike. Wear and enjoy a hat of your choice and style. Prizes will be awarded for Most Colorful Hat and Most Unusual Hat. Cookies and hot chocolate will follow. Preregister by calling 419-384-7195 or by emailing thequarryfarm@gmail.com.

2018 Great Backyard Bird Count

Saturday, February 17, 8 to 9:30 a.m.

Meet in Seitz Family Pavilion, 1/8 mile north of 14321 Road 7L, Pandora

Bird populations are always shifting and changing. Each February, the National Audubon Society and Cornell Lab of Ornithology team up to coordinate the Great Backyard Bird Count. Join us as we walk the trails to document the many species of birds that shelter in the preserve, as well as those that stop by on their annual migration. All recorded species will be submitted to the international count as part of the largest instantaneous snapshot of global bird populations. Preregister by calling 419-384-7195 or by emailing thequarryfarm@gmail.com.

Teachers: Schedule your Spring and Fall class visits now. Call 419-384-7195 or email thequarryfarm@gmail.com. We also have programs that can be done in your classroom.

Thank you...

...to Daryl and Peg Bridenbaugh for pumpkins and straw
...to Tim and Megan Cusick for pumpkins and squash
...to Kathy Doty for apples
...to Mike Erchenbrecher for pumpkins

Monetary Donations:

Doug and Sandy Downing
Drisana Etayo
Linda Gorey
Matthew and Alisa Herman
Ottawa Kiwanis
Paulding Putnam Electric Cooperative
Diana Spellman
Laura Zitzelberger



Winter flock

WISH LIST

The following items are needed for garden and visitor trail development and educational animal ambassador rehabilitation, care and handling. Please call 419-384-7195 or email thequarryfarm@gmail.com if you can supply anything on the list.

- unsalted tree nuts in the shell (acorns, almonds, hazelnuts)
- apples
- carrots
- pumpkins or other whole squash
- volunteers to cut honeysuckle

(continued on back page)