

Marching Orders

Last year I began to hear a lot about conservation ecologist Douglas Tallamy. Naturalists in talks I attended cited his ideas about using native plants to restore biodiversity and save ecosystems from destructive human impact. He was the leading presenter this winter in a five-part webinar from The Ohio State University entitled “Pollinators 101.” The ideas were so compelling, and their truth so undeniable that I’ve collected a little reference library of Dr. Tallamy’s work. In the words of one reviewer, “Doug Tallamy is a quiet revolutionary and a hero of our time, taking back the future one yard at a time. In *Nature’s Best Hope*, he shows how each of us can help turn our cities, towns, and world into engines of biodiversity and human health.”

What makes Dr. Tallamy’s work so convincing to me is that his ideas are drawn from a broad range of observations and research in conservation science, and his writing is engaging and readable. In *Nature’s Best Hope*, which I’m reading now, he advances many thought-provoking ideas. Two interesting passages discuss the concept of “carrying capacity” of a parcel of land and the vital importance of caterpillars to birds and the larger food web. (That includes us.) In one chapter he proposes a “Homegrown National Park,” a nationwide effort of home gardeners landscaping with natives that would correct the “hemorrhaging of species” due to habitat fragmentation—our national parks being too disconnected to sustain a diversity of wildlife, and a large percentage of land being unavailable—either in agricultural production or overbuilt. Our lawns en masse would comprise enough habitat for species to thrive if landscaped instead with native herbaceous plants, shrubs and trees. He shows how gardening with natives can be as aesthetically pleasing as lifeless lawns and introduced garden landscapes; our home gardens acting as a network could sustain species in a way that our scattered parks cannot.

Even part way into my little library, I know that I can’t go back to gardening just to please my human aesthetic. I want my gardening to focus on sustaining pollinators. Being painfully aware that some of my past practices have stripped birds and pollinators of habitat, I aim now to support them by adding more native plants. I want to be able to sit on the front porch of Red Fox Cabin in the evenings and see more birds and insects flitting about because they’ve found



Native to the eastern United States, Buttonbush has glossy green leaves and fragrant, round flower clusters during mid-summer. The shrub attracts more than 24 species of birds as well as numerous species of butterflies.

the food and shelter they’ve learned over millennia to live with.

In future, I would love to be part of a “pollinator book club” to read and discuss ideas in the works of Dr. Tallamy and other ecologists. I would also love to collaborate with my neighbors, including several who already have native plantings for wildlife, to declare our country road a “pollinator corridor.”

My little library, in order of publication:

- Douglas Tallamy. *Bringing nature home: how you can sustain wildlife with native plants*. Timber Press, 2007.
- Rick Darke & Douglas Tallamy. *The living landscape: designing for beauty and diversity in the home garden*. Timber Press, 2014
- Tony Dove and Ginger Woolridge. *Essential trees and shrubs: the guide to creating a sustainable landscape*. Timber Press, 2018
- Douglas Tallamy. *Nature’s best hope: a new approach to conservation that starts in your yard*. Timber Press, 2019.
- Douglas Tallamy. *The nature of oaks: the rich ecology of our most essential native trees*. Timber Press, 2021.

—The Gardener at Red Fox Cabin



A Hummingbird Moth nectars on Monarda (bee balm). The entire genus of Monarda is endemic—native—to North America, although *Monarda fistulosa* is native to Ohio fields and prairies.



The Common Hackberry used to be referred to as a “junk tree”. But these tall, gorgeous native hardwoods invite butterflies into your life, including the Hackberry Emperor and Snout butterflies. They lay their eggs on them, giving them the common name “Mama Tree.”

Spring 2023 Programs & Events

Dress for the weather, including good walking shoes, and meet in Seitz Family Pavilion, 1/8 mile north of 14321 Road 7L, Pandora. There is no fee to participate. Tax-deductible donations are welcome.

Discover the Night Hike

Friday, April 14, 8 p.m.

Any artificial light that is not needed is a pollutant that has serious and harmful consequences. Light pollution can disrupt wildlife, impact human health, waste money, and energy, contribute to climate change, and block our view of the universe. International Dark Sky Week is marked every year during the week of the new moon in April and this year it will be observed from April 15 to 22. Join us on the night before the worldwide observance and the week before Earth Day and learn how valuing the night sky can help us all.

Spring Migration Bird Hike

Saturday, May 20, 8 to 10:30 a.m.

Migration will be in full swing during that time and our leader Deb Weston, Birder and Quarry Farm Board Member, hopes we’ll see some nice warblers.

Dress for the weather in earth-toned colors and sturdy hiking shoes that can get muddy. We’ll be walking with stops to look and listen for migrating and resident birds. Participants will learn which are passing through on their way to breeding grounds in Canada and which will stay to nest here. If the birds are actively singing, we’ll listen for the differences between species. What we see will be documented on Cornell Lab of Ornithology’s ebird and shared with any participants who want to share their email. Bring binoculars and cameras are welcome.

(Note: We won’t use bird songs on devices to draw the birds in, especially during breeding season when they have enough to contend with. Sensitive species may leave the area if they hear a rival.)

Spring Tea Tasting in the Garden

Saturday, June 17, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

(Rain date: Saturday, July 8, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.)

Taste tea with Kathleen’s Kitchen in the fresh air of the Seitz family Pavilion. This presentation will include a brief history of tea and tea culture. Participants will taste 3-4 curated loose leaf teas and enjoy a selection of freshly baked items from Kathleen’s menu. We will also have a wonderful display of privately owned tea pots and tea cups. If you’d like to bring a treasured tea pot or cup for display, we ask that your item be accompanied by an index card that includes your name and any interesting details about the piece that you care to share.

Preregistration is required by Tuesday, June 13. Email thequarryfarm@gmail.com with the number of people that you would like to register.

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram for updates.



THE Quarry FARM
NATURE PRESERVE & CONSERVATION FARM



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Do you have questions, want to schedule an outing or workshop for your group or keep up with what’s happening here? Email thequarryfarm@gmail, follow us on Facebook, Instagram and visit www.thequarryfarm.org or call 567-376-0705.

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.



A Magnolia Warbler perched in the 2022 springtime sun behind Red Fox Cabin. (Photo by Deb Weston)

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: T the Canada Goose is a transfer from Lake Erie Nature & Science Center. Raised illegally as a pet, T is tagged in hopes that he will assimilate into a wild flock and be tracked during his lifetime.

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

www.thequarryfarm.org

Printed on recycled, recyclable paper



The Hat Day Hike was clear and cool. It was literally a good day for reflecting between the still waters of the old quarry and flowing Cranberry Run.

Under One Big Sky

The weather played around with our winter program schedule but we did get some events in during the first three months of 2023.

Hometown Stations joined in the January 15 Hat Day Hike. Journalist Bethany Ulrick was behind the camera. After the trail hike she visited with the farm animal sanctuary residents a bit, sharing photos of the donkeys on social media.

March 4 flooding turned the floodplain into a spring lake. The wetlands did their job, giving field runoff a place to settle and filter before the water whooshed downstream. The geese and ducks loved deep pools in the lowland of the farm animal sanctuary, swimming and race-flapping back and forth with great fervor.

Due to 60-mph wind gusts, cold and 88% cloud cover, the March 18 Worm Moon Walk was canceled. Great peace settled over everything on Sunday, giving us a chance to survey for damage. One tree over the trail was removed by David Seitz.

While cold and high water may have led to program cancellations, it didn't stop valiant volunteers from their efforts. Birder Deb Weston has carried her camera out on early mornings to watch winter birds feed and shelter in the nature preserve. She has also watched the beginnings of Spring migration in preparation for the Spring Migration Bird Hike on May 20.

LGBTQ+ Spectrum of Findlay held "Born Wild, Stay Wild" with Max Weisner of The Loft presenting a program about the importance of leaving wild babies in the wild. Virginia Estella made an appearance to demonstrate what wonderful creatures Virginia Opossums are and how she must live in captivity because someone kept her as a pet.

David Seitz did more than remove a tree after the mid-March winds. As he has since before the pandemic, he visits at least twice a week to remove all sizes of bush honeysuckle, privet and euonymus from the roots up, cut grape vine that threaten to pull down tall trees, build and monitor bridges and quarry levels. Dave has made The Quarry Farm the envy of surrounding park systems' natural resource managers in terms of invasive plant removal. Here are his notes from March 28:

"Started by cleaning up the little honeysuckles beside the NE trail, just where it climbs the ridge. Gave that 2 hours, ending up past the overpass tree. Moved back to the NW corner of the back field, clearing several small piles of brush north of the well trail, and clearing the heavy vines off the ground and trees. Worked the honeysuckle thicket about half way down the ridge, at that corner, hauling the brush up to the brush pile at the edge of the ridge. There were small ducks on the quarry when I was leaving, and a pair of geese. Noticed that the new gully bridge had slid off its supports on the south end. Jacked up the bridge, and put the blocks back under it."

Resident Spotlight: Virginia Estella

The winter newsletter featured Tim the Canada Goose, a fascinating survivor who was transferred here from the Lake Erie Nature & Science Center. He travelled here with another wild animal that could not be returned to the wild. In Tim's case, it is believed that he was severely injured by a car and his injuries left him unable to extend his neck much above his shoulders or fly. However, his traveling companion, a young Virginia Opossum, will live her life in captivity because she was never allowed to learn what it is to be wild and free. She was found with several of her siblings in the basement of someone's home. The siblings were released but she was kept as a pet. Her fur was even dyed bright pink. When we met her at LENS, there were still patches of pink on her body and she has absolutely no fear of predators, including people.



Virginia Estella and Tim Jasinski

Since the Virginia Opossum will be living out her life as an educational ambassador for Virginia Opossums, giving people the opportunity for first hand encounters with these amazing animals, she needed a name to share. Deb Kemerley submitted the winning name: Virginia Estella. Estella means "star" and she is that already. Estella has already been the star at two public programs and will be featured in at least 15 this season.

Most Virginia Opossums have short lives. Those in the wild survive only a year or two: Many die because they don't make it to their mother's pouch; newly weaned and adult opossums are prey for numerous carnivores; and vehicles take a significant toll, too. In captivity, they live three to four years. Tim Jasinski, LENS Wildlife Rehabilitation Specialist introduced us to the center's current program Virginia Opossum who is four. We immediately asked for a copy of her prescribed diet. She comes out to explore and is working on "litter-box" training in a pan of water.

Do More By Doing Less?

This May, visitors to the Quarry Farm will see signs onsite like the one to the right, standing in what might be considered unsightly, tall grass. Why? For starters, research has found that simple changes in mowing can result in enough nectar for 10 times more bees and other pollinators.

First popularized in 2019 in the United Kingdom, No Mow May has taken root here in the United States. In 2020, Wisconsin became the first state in the U.S. to adopt the practice. No Mow May began as a way to help bees and other pollinators, but there's more to it than that. Take a break from lawn care in May and:

1. You'll get some beneficial spring color.
2. Bees will get an early season boost.
3. You'll cut down on pollution.
4. You'll save time and energy.
5. Your lawn will be healthier. Find out how by scanning the QR code for a fact sheet prepared by Pennsylvania State University.



Thank you...

...to Daryl Bridenbaugh for donating hay and straw during the height of winter
 ...to David Seitz for honeysuckle and vine removal and hydrological engineering
 ...to Spectrum of Findlay for donating apples, potatoes and pears to enrich the diets of the farm animal sanctuary residents
 ...to Bethany Ulrick of Hometown Stations for covering the Hat Day Hike
 ...to Deb Weston for leading the Great Backyard Bird Count

Monetary Donations:

Bruce Coburn in memory of Bert Coburn
 William Derkin (on behalf of Tim the Goose)
 Lauren Dillon
 Paula Harper
 Laura Gretzinger
 Clara Leigh Linden
 Daniel Schumacher
 Deb Weston
 Mike Erchenbrecher

Wish List

• whole potatoes, apples and tree nuts for the farm animal sanctuary residents



Let Goldenrod Grow!

The many species of Goldenrod (*Solidago*) are native. It's an important source of nectar and pollen for native bees from July through early October. Caterpillars that it hosts are a vital food source for birds, and its seeds feed overwintering and migratory birds. It withstands drought. It lights up the landscape and doesn't make us sneeze.