



THE STEW CREW NEWS

August 2017

Conservation Calendar

Native Seed Collection
at Glenwood Gardens 8/8

Cut/Treat Honeysuckle
from the
Wood Duck Trail 8/12

Harvesting
Milkweed Seed 8/23

Common Milkweed
Harvesting at Little
Miami Golf Center 8/30

Shaker Trace
Nursery Work Varies

Reminders

- Bring something to drink
- Wear sturdy gloves
- Consider bug repellent
- We recommend long pants, long-sleeved shirts and closed-toe shoes
- Remember to record your hours under **Stew Crew [NATURAL RESOURCES\ All Locations]**

Coping with Loss: A Farewell to Ash

By Chris Glassmeyer

In 2003, the state of Ohio had an estimated 3.8 billion ash trees existing in our forests, woodlots, and in our own backyard. Today, that is not the case. The emerald ash borer (EAB) has swept across our state at record pace and is wiping out ash trees where they stand. EAB was first detected near Toledo in 2003, but it is now known to exist in all 88 of Ohio's counties. The larvae of this beetle is an insatiable grub which feasts on the living vascular tissue of the tree. The insect is killing our ash trees and costing Ohio residents billions of dollars in tree removal, and replacement costs, plus an ecological cost that is hard to even quantify. There will likely be no great rebound of ash in our lifetime, so looking forward we must ask ourselves; how do we cope?

The loss of such an important canopy species has ecological impacts that we are just beginning to understand. The loss of forest canopy allows sunlight to reach the forest floor and spur new plant growth. In an ideal world, this is not a bad thing. This creates early successional habitat as new trees start to grow and benefits a multitude of wildlife. Unfortunately, that is not the reality we face here in southwest Ohio. Bush honeysuckle, oriental bittersweet, callery pear, multiflora rose and a score of other invasive plants are quickly taking advantage of this available sunlight. If gone unchecked these areas would be infested with non-native plants and new trees would not be able to compete for sunlight to replace the dead ash. With all that said and the odds stacked against us, the question still stands; what do we do?



The task of restoring our forests has been embraced by Great Parks of Hamilton County. A small number of highly-valued ash trees are being treated with a chemical to fend off EAB. This technique is effective, but not feasible on a large-scale reforestation project. Great Parks is also taking on the after-effects of ash die-back. Herbicide applications are important tools in controlling invasive plant species. Well-trained staff and volunteers use various application techniques to achieve specific results, with minimal impact to non-target species. This allows the natural succession of new trees to grow and fill in the canopy gaps left behind by the dying ash. Supplemental tree plantings are sometimes utilized to give these areas a head start.

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August Stew Crew Projects

Native Seed Collection at Glenwood Gardens

What: In an effort to promote biodiversity in our natural areas, every year dozens of native plant species are planted and propagated at Great Parks' Shaker Trace Nursery. Those plants and seeds are then distributed to many parks for restoration projects. Join us as we pick through the natural areas of Glenwood Gardens to help bolster our supply of native seed for next year's cultivation. This activity is a valuable way to learn native plant identification, and a great way to connect to the land that we are all so passionate about protecting.

When: Tuesday, August 8 from 9 a.m.—noon

Where: Meet at the Glenwood Gardens Tech Center, 377 Sheffield Rd.

Register: RSVP by August 7th to Chris Glassmeyer at cglassmeyer@greatparks.org

Cut/Treat Honeysuckle from the Inner Loop of the Wood Duck Trail

What: Join us as we continue hand cutting honeysuckle from inside the loop of the Wood Duck Trail.

When: Saturday, August 12 from noon–3 p.m.

Where: Meet at the Wood Duck Trail parking lot in Mitchell Memorial Forest.

Register: RSVP by August 11 to Scott Peak at speak@greatparks.org



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With all of these odds stacked against us, it is more important now than ever to stay vigilant. New populations of invasives must be sought out and managed before they become well established and much harder to fight. The sad truth is that ash may be facing the same fate as the American chestnut, but Great Parks is fortunate to have a dedicated group of staff and volunteers to keep fighting the good fight. Though the outlook from here may seem bleak, the seeds of victory are still in the ground. We just have to give them a chance.

Harvesting Milkweed Seed

What: Help ensure the survival of the Monarch Butterfly and experience a park that you likely have never visited. Join us as we collect milkweed pods at the Kilby tract.

When: Wednesday, August 23 from 9 a.m.—noon

Where: We will meet at Campbell Lakes Preserve 10431 Campbell Road and car pool to the Kilby tract.

Register: RSVP by August 22 to Scott Peak at speak@greatparks.org

Common Milkweed Harvesting at Little Miami Golf Center

What: Help ensure the survival of the monarch butterfly! Join us as we collect milkweed seed at what we've dubbed "monarch heaven" at Little Miami Golf Center. This area is being intensively managed for monarch butterflies, which are in a serious decline.

When: Wednesday, August 30 from 9 a.m.—noon

Where: Little Miami Golf Center, 3811 Newtown Rd, Cincinnati, OH 45244

Register: RSVP by August 29th to Chris Glassmeyer at cglassmeyer@greatparks.org

Shaker Trace Nursery Work

What: Join us as we work together to accomplish daily nursery tasks that will change with the seasons.

When: Every Thursday any time after 8:00 a.m. until noon year round.

Also from April-October Thursday afternoon any time after 3:30 p.m. until 6:00 or 7:00 weather permitting

Where: Miami Whitewater Forest, Shaker Trace Nursery 8667 New Haven Road, Harrison, OH 45030

Register: None required – just stop by!



Perhaps nature is our best assurance of immortality.

—Eleanor Roosevelt