

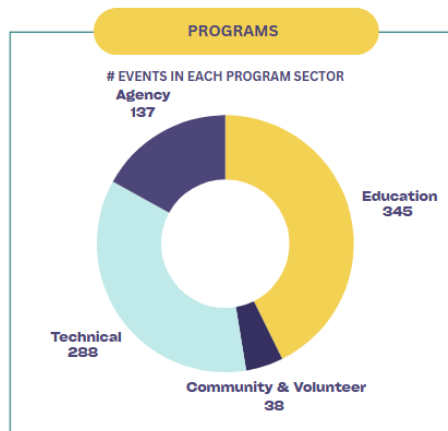
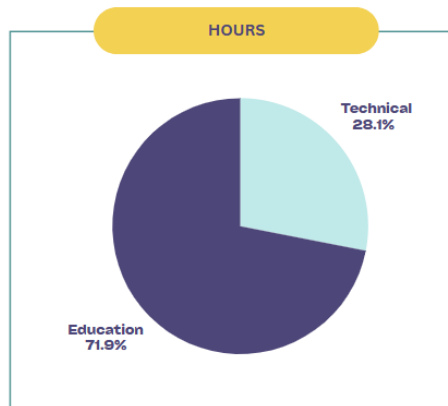
Where Does the Time Go?

Kelly Crout, District Director

I am not sure if anyone else is feeling the same way, but I feel like 2024 just started and now it is almost over. While COVID was almost four years ago, I feel like I can't remember the first half of this year. That could be partially because I was on maternity leave, but I think the bigger reason is it's been a busy year. Our SWCD staff have worked hard in every aspect - from workshop planning and implementing, a whirlwind of education events and classroom presentations, traveling all over the county conducting technical site visits, to designing and checking some of our biggest waterway projects to date. We have had new ideas and opportunities - some by choice and others by association. And with the completion of our rebranding is a whole new workload.

Some things did not go as planned this year, some programs were too good to be true, and others we are still waiting on. Growth and progress come at a cost, which hopefully we have weathered for another year. It's the hope that we made the right decisions in 2024 and that 2025 will be better because of those decisions.

I hope your 2024 was also busy, maybe it was a mixed bag, like ours at Butler SWCD. It's not always easy, but as the saying goes "nothing worth doing rarely is."



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**2024
SUMMARY**

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Species Spotlight

Dakotah Zimmer, Natural Resource Technician

Here at Butler SWCD, we are once again preparing for our annual Native Tree & Shrub Sale for 2025! This year we are keeping things simple with only 10 different species of trees and shrubs available for **in-person purchase only**, at our office located at 1802 Princeton Road, Hamilton, Ohio 45011. Some popular species that were offered during our 2024 sale will be back this year; if you missed out on pawpaw, redbud, or flowering dogwood last year, this will be your chance! Similar to previous years, each species will be sold in packs of 5. For example, if you purchase 2 packs of pawpaw trees, you will receive 10 bareroot pawpaw seedlings.

Let's highlight some of the species that will be available this March 2025.

Persimmon (*Diospyros virginiana*)



Persimmon tree. Photo credit: John Hagstrom, The Morton Arboretum.

The common persimmon tree (*Diospyros virginiana*) is a slow growing, yet adaptable species. Persimmon trees can grow in a wide range of soil conditions and are very tolerant of disease and shady areas. While most species within *Diospyros* are native to subtropic and tropic climates, Ohio has its very own native species of persimmon!

In optimal conditions, persimmon trees can grow up to 80ft tall. In poorer site conditions, persimmon trees could remain short and shrubby, or only grow up to 60ft tall.

Persimmons are mostly recognized by their dark brown, square and chunky bark and by their orange astringent fruits barreled in the fall. Ripe persimmon fruits are enjoyed by wildlife such as birds, small mammals, and even humans.

Shagbark Hickory (*Carya ovata*)

Shagbark hickory trees (*Carya ovata*) are easy to spot within the landscape due to their loose, shaggy bark and their tall straight form, reaching up to 80ft tall. Shagbark hickories are a slow growing, but long-lived species, as it could take up to 40 years to produce a nut crop, yet live for up to 200-300 years.



Shagbark hickory tree. Photo credit: John Sharman, Vitalitree, bugwood.com.

Hickory trees are great sources of food and habitat for wildlife; with an abundant nut crop and shaggy, loose bark for roosting mammals and insects such as various bat species and the Luna moth. Shagbark hickory trees make for a stately shade tree, whether it's planted in a large, open yard or within a naturalized area.

Willow Oak (*Quercus phellos*)



Willow oak tree. Photo credit: Philippe de Spoelberch, International Dendrology Society.

The willow oak (*Quercus phellos*) is a unique, yet lesser known tree in the oak genus. Oak trees are usually identifiable by their classic lobed oak leaves; however, this oak stays true to its common name with its willow-like foliage. The willow oak has become more commonly used in landscaping due to its rapid growth, long life, and it's ability to be easily transplanted.

Willow oaks are members of the red oak group, presenting bronze-red foliage in the fall. The willow oak produces a high yield of small acorns every year once the tree reaches reproductive maturity, or about 20 years old. In optimal growing conditions, such as bottomlands or floodplains, willow oaks can grow up to 80-120ft tall.

Serviceberry (*Amelanchier arborea*)

Serviceberry (*Amelanchier arborea*) is a large, flowering shrub which can grow 15-25ft tall within landscape conditions, or up to 40ft tall within naturalized areas. Serviceberry blooms emerge before the leaves in early spring from March - April.

Serviceberry is a great native species to replace the invasive Callery pear tree (*Pyrus calleryana*) due to the similarities in their 5-petal white flowers. As its common name suggests, serviceberries develop small red fruits from May - August that turn dark red-purple upon ripening.



Serviceberry tree. Photo credit: Jim Robbins, North Carolina Extension Gardener.

Serviceberry provides early seasonal nectar for pollinators, habitat for insect hosts, and food for songbirds, small mammals, and humans alike.

Elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*)



Elderberry shrub. Photo credit: H. Zell, North Carolina Extension Gardener.

Common elderberry (*Sambucus canadensis*) is a flowering shrub which can grow up to 15ft tall in a variety of site conditions. Elderberry is usually found in naturalized areas, along streams or ponds, and in disturbed areas, but can be used in rain gardens or pollinator gardens; if root suckers are pruned regularly to minimize its spread. From June - July, elderberry blooms clusters of small white flowers which give way to clusters of purple-black berries from August - Septembers. Elderberry attracts various pollinators such as butterflies and bees due to its abundance of blooms and nectar sources in late summer. Due to its arching, shrubby appearance, elderberry provides great habitat for nesting birds and bees, while also providing an abundant food source of berries.

Witch-hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*)

Common witch-hazel (*Hamamelis virginiana*) is a flowering shrub usually found along woodland edges and streambanks that can grow up to 20ft tall.

Witch-hazel can be planted in home landscapes and naturalized areas alike, but it lives longer and blooms best in moist, full sun sites. Witch-hazel is unique in that it flowers and fruits during the winter when most plants are dormant, creating a pop of color in an otherwise dreary winter landscape.



Witch-hazel shrub. Photo credit: Philippe de Spoelberch, International Dendrology Society.

Witch-hazel blooms bright yellow-orange, ribbon-like flowers that appear along the shrub's branches from October - December. The dense canopy of witch-hazel can also make for a great privacy hedge during the spring and summer, similar to the nonnative shrub, Forsythia.

If you have any questions about the species of trees and shrubs that will be available during our 2025 sale, please reach out to our office.

2025 SWOWA Schedule



Are you a friend of the forest, have an interest in managing your woods, or just love trees? Consider joining SWOWA, the Southwest Ohio Woodland Association. A laid-back group of people who get together quarterly, to learn about different topics, go on forestry hikes, and much more. Did I mention we love trees?

January 19 - The American Tree Farm System, tree care, & much more! Location: Great Miami River Center, 120 South Carmody Blvd., Middletown, OH 45044

April 27 - Oak Regeneration. Location: 1734 East Boat Run Rd., New Richmond, OH 45157

July 20 - TBA

October 19 - TBA

Join our email list to learn about upcoming workshops by emailing Randy Evans at director@3vct.org.

2025 Native Tree & Shrub Sale

The past few years Butler SWCD has tried out new formats for our annual Native Tree & Shrub Sale, some have gone really well and some not so much. So, for 2025 we're going to try another format; in-person sales only. **No pre-orders will be taken.** That means that the sale will be on a first-come, first-serve basis. We will have 10 species of trees and/or shrubs available to purchase.

In-Person Sale Dates:

Wednesday, March 26 - 10:00 AM - 7:00 PM

Friday, March 28

Saturday, March 29 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Sale Location:

Butler SWCD Building
1802 Princeton Road, Hamilton, OH 45011

Forms of Payment Accepted:

All sales must be paid for with cash or check only.

No credit card payments will be accepted.

Sales Tax:

We are required by the state of Ohio to collect sales tax on all orders. If you are tax exempt, please reach out prior to in-person sale date by calling (513) 887-3720 or emailing butlerswcd@bcoho.gov. You will be required to provide an exemption form prior to sale date, which can be found on our website at www.butlerswcd.org.

Other Important Information:

This year, our bareroot seedlings are from Forrest Keeling Nursery, located in Missouri. By switching to a nursery within the same hardiness zone as Southwest Ohio, we hope to increase seedling survivability rate and vigor. Although not guaranteed, the plants are inspected by the nursery to be disease free before shipment. Butler SWCD is not responsible for their survival after they have been picked up by the customer. If a species is not able to be supplied by the nursery due to disease we will replace with another species. All packs will contain 5 seedlings of the same species.

The species listed will be available to purchase at our Native Tree and Shrub Sale in March 2025:

- **Shade trees** (80ft +)
 - * Persimmon
 - * Shagbark hickory
 - * Willow oak
- **Smaller trees** (< 40ft)
 - * Pawpaw
 - * Serviceberry
 - * Redbud
 - * Flowering dogwood
- **Shrubs** (< 20ft)
 - * Elderberry
 - * Witch-hazel
 - * Buttonbush



The Little Seed Library

Brady Smith, Rural Specialist

As part of Butler SWCD's ongoing efforts to promote native habitat and local seed collection, we are debuting 'The Little Seed Library'. Similar to book and mini-food pantries popping up in neighborhoods across the nation, this box will house native wildflowers and garden seeds. Inside are dozens of different seeds available, all free for taking, including but not limited to: milkweed, bee balm, black eyed Susan, vegetable seeds, and ornamental flowers.

The goal of the library is to be a free source of local ecotype wildflowers and help provide food security. Seed quantities are limited, so we ask that visitors take only what they need and plant everything you take so that no seed goes to waste.

If you are interested in seed saving and collecting, please be conscious of what you are collecting. Adhere to local laws and technology agreements. A few good things to remember if you are seed saving:

- Only collect native, non-invasive species
- Collect seeds from healthy plants to limit transmission of seedborne disease
- Make sure you are only collecting garden seeds from heirloom or non-patented varieties
- Avoid collecting from cross pollinated specimens
- If you are unsure of anything do not collect
- Only collect where you have permission

Wildflower seeds are collected by the Butler Environmental Stewardship Team then cleaned and processed during one or more of our monthly volunteer events. Milkweed seed collection is part of a statewide effort called the Ohio Pollinator Habitat Initiative. If you are in need of bulk quantities of milkweed seeds for a restoration project please contact the Butler SWCD office directly, there are quart size bags available.

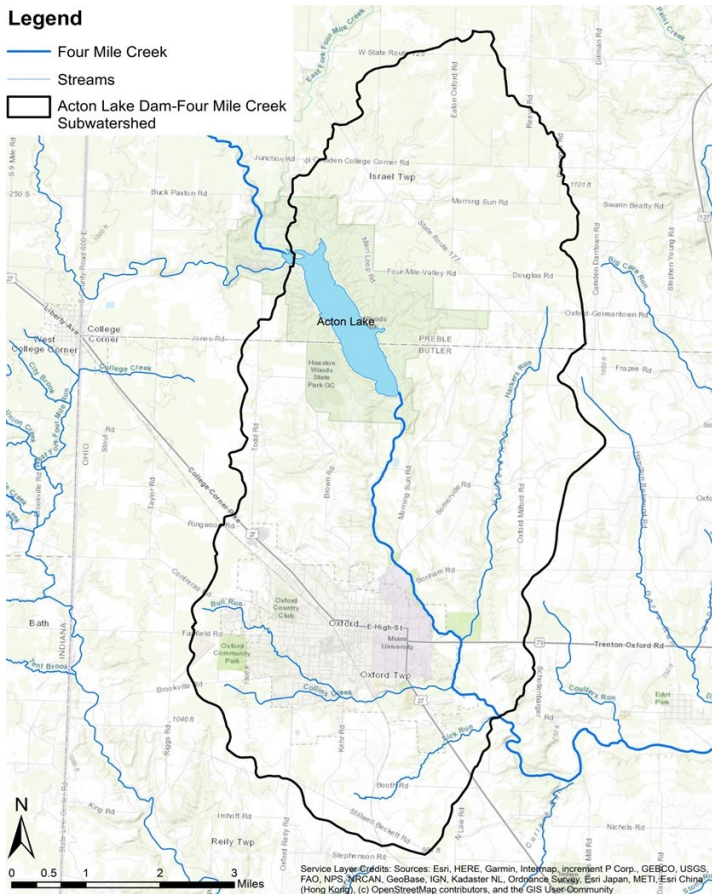
Special thank you to Brubaker Grain and The Ohio State University Extension Office, Butler County for donating vegetable garden seed packets, and Three Valley Conservation Trust for donating the library box.

If you are interested in picking up seeds from the Little Seed Library, visit 1802 Princeton Road, Suite 300, Hamilton 45011 during business hours (Monday to Friday, 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM). If you have seeds to drop-off or any other related questions please email butlerswcd@bcoho.gov.

Watershed Planning Update

Ashlee Widener, Water Resource Specialist

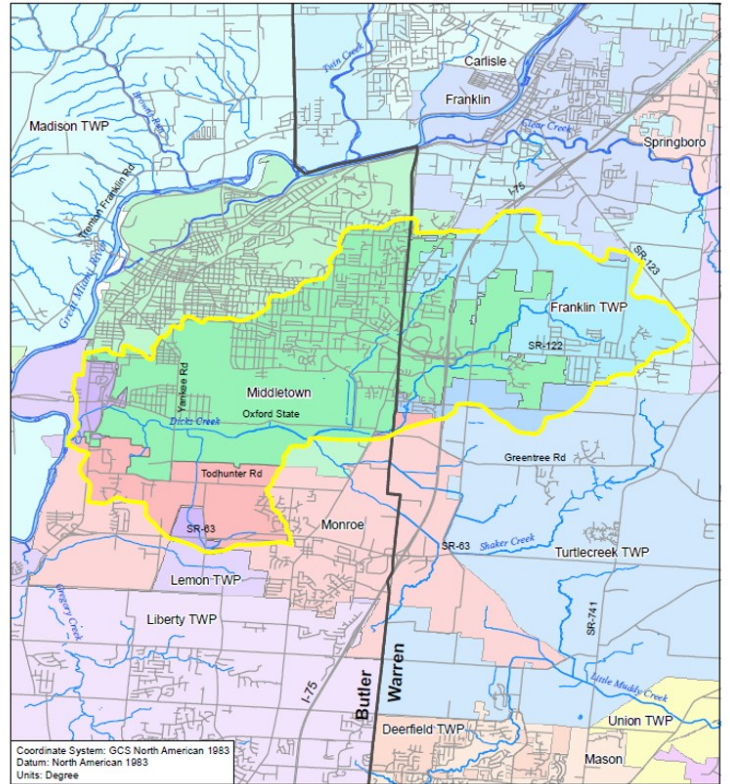
Butler Soil and Water has been busy over the past few years working on watershed and project planning. Butler SWCD has worked on and completed two Ohio EPA 9-Element Nonpoint Source Implementation Strategy (NPS-IS) plans. These 9-element NPS-IS plans follow the Ohio EPA framework for watershed planning. These NPS-IS plans outline characteristics and background of the watershed, existing water quality and biological data, establish a list of critical areas, address sources and causes of impairments, and list projects that will be implemented to address the objectives listed for each critical area. The Acton Lake Dam-Four Mile Creek (ALD-FMC) and the Dicks Creek 9-element plans have been recently approved by Ohio EPA. With the approval of these watershed plans, certain projects, like dam removals and stream restoration, can be considered for Section 319 Nonpoint Source Management Program funds under the Clean Water Act.



ALD-FMC Watershed.

Several projects in each watershed are being developed to potentially receive funds from 319 or other possible funding sources, like H2Ohio. These projects include dam removals and stream and wetland restoration projects. There are three dam removal projects within the ALD-FMC watershed that have multiple project partners working on them. The Dicks Creek 9-Element Plan, developed in partnership with Warren County Soil and Water Conservation District, was approved recently this year.

Warren and Butler SWCD are in the early planning stages of developing projects and will hopefully be holding a stakeholder meeting in the Dicks Creek watershed in 2025.



This map was compiled from various data sources. Warren Co. SWCD does not guarantee complete accuracy. Map created by Sam Ciaramitaro on September 19, 2019. Warren Co. SWCD, 320 E. Silver St., Lebanon, OH 45036

Dicks Creek Watershed.

Integration between stakeholders such as farmers, landowners, watershed groups, agencies, and others play a key role in the development of these watershed plans. Butler SWCD has also supported Three Valley Conservation Trust in the development of the Paddy's Run, Beals Run-Indian Creek, Upper Dry Fork, and future Cotton Run-Four Mile Creek 9-element plans. These watershed plans help determine causes and sources of impairment in our local watersheds and support projects that can help reduce pollutants and restore biological conditions in local streams and rivers. Keep an eye out for any project or watershed planning updates. If you are aware of any severe environmental issues in these watersheds, please don't hesitate to reach out.

You can access the Acton Lake Dam-Four Mile Creek NPS-IS plan and other completed plans here:

<https://epa.ohio.gov/divisions-and-offices/surface-water/reports-data/approved-nine-element-nonpoint-source-implementation-strategies-in-ohio>.

Butler County Fertilizer & Pesticide Recertification (In-Person)

Date:
Tuesday, February 4, 2025

Location:
OSU Extension, Butler County
1802 Princeton Road, Hamilton, OH 45011

Times:
FACT 12:30 PM - 1:30 PM
PAT 1:30 PM - 4:30 PM

Cost:
Fertilizer Only \$15
Fertilizer & Pesticide \$35

Contact / RSVP:
J.T. Benitez - benitez.6@osu.edu - (513) 714-3891
FACT/PAT class fees are a separate cost from your renewal application fee, to be paid to the ODA. The ODA will be mailing you your renewal application. Let the ODA or J.T. Benitez know if you did not receive your renewal mailing.

To receive a recertification, it is a two-part process:

1. Attend a FACT/PAT recertification training
2. Complete/Return ODA renewal application form

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) EQIP Program for 2025



The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) provides technical and financial assistance to Agricultural producers and Forest landowners. This is a voluntary and competitive program that could potentially help those who have environmental concerns on their land. NRCS administers the program at the county level and is currently taking applications through January 31, 2025.

If you are interested in applying or have questions about the Program, please contact John Williams, District Conservationist by calling (513) 887-3720 or emailing john.williams.2@usda.gov.



Be Salt Smart this Winter!

Road salts can pollute streams, rivers, and drinking water and are toxic to many plants, aquatic fish, and insects.

Road salts are also highly corrosive to metals and can negatively impact pets, vehicles, and more.

Learn how you can reduce your salt impacts:

-  Manually remove snow and ice, if possible
-  Reduce salt usage near sensitive water resources like source water protection locations and streams and rivers
-  Pay attention to the weather and only apply the necessary amounts

2025 Newsletter Sponsorship Form

To purchase advertisement space in our quarterly newsletter for 2025, please fill out the information below for one of the following options and return to our office by **Friday, January 10, 2025**.

- 1.) Remove advertisement for _____, which will not be renewed.
- 2.) Keep current advertisement for _____
(Check One) _____ without any changes, or _____ with the following changes:

- 3.) Please place a new advertisement for _____
Contact Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Please send a business card with this form. Graphics will be included as space allows.

The space is approximately 2.5" x 1.5" in size, and the price for the year is \$125. Please send this completed form, a business card, and a check made payable to Butler SWCD, 1802 Princeton Road, Suite 300, Hamilton, Ohio 45011. If you have any questions at all please reach out to our office by calling (513) 887-3720 or emailing Sarah.Hill@bcoho.gov.

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Butler SWCD 2025 Scholarship
 This is a non-renewable \$500 college scholarship to students enrolling in classes which focus on the conservation of natural resources. For eligibility and application visit www.butlerswcd.org/grants.
Application Deadline: February 28

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 USDA: An Equal Opportunity Provider, Employer, and Lender.

Upcoming Events

- **Office Closed, New Years:** January 1
- **Office Closed, MLK Day:** January 20
- **Winter Tree ID Hike:** January 25
- **Outdoor School Site Grant Deadline:** February 1
- **Office Closed, President’s Day:** February 17
- **BEST Volunteer, Harvest Live Stakes:** February 27
- **Butler SWCD Scholarship Deadline:** February 28
- **In-Person Tree Sale:** March 26 - 29

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

Save the dates



Winter Tree ID Hike

Date: Saturday, January 25

Time: 10:00 AM - 12:00 PM

Location: Bull’s Run Nature Sanctuary and Arboretum
 3909 Rosedale Road, Middletown, OH 45042

Cost: Free

Calling all tree-huggers looking to get outside this winter! Join Butler SWCD on Saturday, January 25, as we take a stroll through Bull’s Run Nature Sanctuary and Arboretum with an ISA Certified Arborist®.

This free workshop will teach attendees how to become dendro-detectives by using clues within the landscape to identify trees without leaves. Attendees will be outside for most of the class, so please dress appropriately for the cold weather. If rain or snow is predicted, the class will be moved to February 1 from 10 AM - 12 PM. Binoculars are recommended if you have them.

This workshop has limited space available, please RSVP at butlerswcd@bcchio.gov or call (513) 887-3720 by January 22 to secure your spot.