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THE NEWSLETTER

Dubuque County Conservation Society
"Organized in 1933 for Protection of Soil, Forests, Waters and Wildlife"
P.O. Box 645
Dubuque, IA 52004-0645

Editor comments

Due to the coronavirus and no group contact we have a few missing items in the newsletter:

1. Meeting minutes as we haven't met in months
2. Calendar items as the organizations we follow haven't been sponsoring group events.

Also added Page 5 of April's newsletter

1. The April newsletter had page 7 printed twice and no page 5. Enclosed in this newsletter is the missing page 5.

What can and cannot be composted

From https://dubuquetoday.com/area-tidbits/

Avid gardeners know that compost can add vital nutrients to soil used in gardens, container plants and lawns. The fact that compost is so versatile and nutrient-dense may not even be its most admirable quality. Made from items used in and around the house, compost costs just about nothing to produce.

The raw materials that make up compost come from organic waste. These can be disposables from the garden and kitchen, as well as other areas around the house. According to the United States Environmental Protection Agency, yard trimmings and food scraps add up to 20 to 30 percent of the municipal solid waste in the United States. Turning waste into compost not only helps the landscape, but also the planet.

Compost is relatively easy to make, and there are scores of materials that can be put into compost. But it is just as essential to know which ingredients *cannot* be used in compost.

Okay for compost

Most organic materials, or items that were once living, can be used in compost.
Plant-based items used in cooking, such as potato peelings, carrot skins, banana peels, cocoa hulls, coffee grounds and filters, corn cobs, apple cores, egg shells, fruit peels, kelp, and nut shells, can be added to compost.

Other items from around the house, like unused kitty litter, hair, shredded newspapers and cardboard, leaves, flowers, paper, pine needles, ashes, and sawdust, can be successfully added to compost. Stick to items that are not treated heavily with chemicals.

Should *not* be used in compost

Inorganic and non-biodegradable materials cannot go into compost. These are items like plastic, glass, aluminum foil, and metal. Pressure-treated lumber, although a natural material, is treated with preservatives and often pesticides that can be harmful if they leech into the garden.
The small-gardening resource Balcony Garden Web indicates coated or glossy printed papers, such as those from catalogs, magazines, wrapping paper, marketing materials, and business cards, should not be added to compost piles because of the chemicals and inks used in these pages.

Planet Natural Research Center says to avoid pet droppings from dogs and cats. Animal products like bones, butter, milk, fish skins, and meat may decompose and start to smell foul. Maggots, parasites, pathogens, and other microorganisms can form in the compost. These materials also may attract flies and scavenger animals. Plus, they decompose very slowly.

Any personal hygiene products should be avoided because they are tainted by human fluids and that can pose a health risk.

While weeds are not harmful in compost piles, there is the risk that seeds can germinate and then infiltrate garden beds when the compost is used. The same can be said for tomato plants and some other hardy fruits and vegetables.

Compost is a winner in the garden and around the landscape. Learning which ingredients can and can't be added to compost piles is useful for any gardener.

Clean Your Feeders to Protect Birds

Written by Bruce Ehresman, Retired DNR Bird Ecologist

If you enjoy feeding birds, late winter can be a very exciting time as the migrants start to arrive and claim a place on the feeder beside the birds we've been watching all winter. It's also a time, however, to be extra vigilant about keep your bird feeders clean!

Each year in Iowa, especially during late winter, our office receives reports of sick or dead birds at feeder locations, particularly in the southern part of the state. Aspergillosis, a disease caused by a fungus which often grows in contaminated feed or litter, is one of the main causes of sick and/or dying birds at feeders. When the temperature warms, fungus quickly grows. Birds feeding on contaminated grain often become sick and die.

Salmonellosis is another disease that is contracted at feeders. This disease is caused by the Salmonella bacteria. It is transmitted mostly by contamination of bird droppings, frequently those found in the birds' feed or water. It can also spread when one bird comes into direct contact with another. Birds suffering from this disease can appear weak, listless, and fluffed-up, and they might suffer convulsions before they die.

Some of the finches that appear to be sick have "house finch disease" or conjunctivitis, a disease which causes swelling of the eye tissue but is not always fatal. While this disease was much more prevalent about twenty years ago than it is now, it still shows up in finches at feeders from time to time. This disease particularly affects the respiratory system and is caused by the bacterium, *Mycoplasma gallisepticum*, which poses no threat to humans. As the name suggests, the disease mostly affects House Finches, but there have been a few documented cases of the disease in American Goldfinch, as well. Since birds concentrate at bird feeders, the risk of disease spread can especially increase during times when large numbers of this species are sharing the same feeding sites.

The good news about all three of these diseases is that they are largely preventable. Practicing good hygiene at feeder stations is the key. Clean bird feeders and waterers with a 10 percent bleach solution about once each month. Make sure the feeder is dry before refilling it with seed. Of equal importance to disinfecting the feeder is cleaning up spilled seed and bird droppings below feeders. Be sure to wear rubber gloves while cleaning the feeders, since humans can contract some diseases, such as those caused by some *Salmonella* bacteria, from affected feeders or sick birds. Also you can think about adding extra feeders to your yard, which can slow down spread of disease by eliminating overcrowding.

Our thanks to those of you who report your sick birds to us. The information that you provide helps us learn more about what diseases are infecting Iowa birds, how widespread the disease might be, and which bird species are most affected by a particular disease. We in turn will try to keep you informed of ways to prevent the spread of disease among the large variety of bird species that so many people enjoy watching.
-Written by Bruce Ehresman, Retired DNR Bird Ecologist

Japanese Beetle

Encyclopedia Article From Iowa State University

The Japanese beetle is a well-known pest of turfgrass and landscapes in the eastern United States. JB has been reported from 71 different counties in Iowa since 1994, predominantly in the east-central region of the state. Click here to see the current distribution map.

Adult beetles emerge in mid-June through July. They are similar to other Junebugs in general appearance, and 3/8 inch long and 1/4 inch wide. The head and thorax are shiny me-

tallic green, and the wing covers are coppery red. The row of five tufts of white hairs on each side of the abdomen is a distinguishing feature.

Life cycle of Japanese beetles
Japanese beetle larvae are typical white grubs. They are in the soil from August until June where they feed on plant roots (especially turfgrass) and organic matter. The grubs are C-shaped and approximately 1.25 inches when full grown.

Damage caused by Japanese beetles
Adult beetles eat the foliage, fruits and flowers of over 300 plants. Foliage is consumed by eating the tissue between the veins, a type of feeding called skeletonizing. Flowers and fruits are devoured completely, often by a horde of a dozen or more beetles at a time.

Management of Japanese beetles
Control of adult beetles is difficult because they emerge every day for a period of several weeks. Handpicking or screening or high-value plants may be of benefit in isolated situations with limited numbers of beetles. Spot spraying infested foliage of high value plants with carbaryl (Sevin), permethrin (Eight), bifenthrin or cyfluthrin (Tempo) may reduce damage for several days, but multiple applications are required to maintain control. Spraying the adult stage is not an effective strategy for prevention of white grubs.

Several traps using a floral lure and sex attractant are available. Use of these traps is not recommended. Research conducted in Kentucky suggests that they are not effective in controlling moderate to heavy infestations; and they may attract more beetles into a yard than would occur otherwise. The traps may reduce damage and populations when landscapes are isolated from other Japanese beetle breeding areas or when mass trapping (everyone in the neighborhood) is used.

Japanese Beetle Host Plant Preferences
One way to limit the impact of adult Japanese beetle defoliation may be to select plants that the Japanese beetles tend to avoid. The following list of the Japanese beetle's most and least-favored woody plants may be useful to people designing new landscapes in areas infested by this beetle.

Most Favored by Japanese Beetle	**Least Favored by Japanese Beetle**
Birch, gray	Ash, white, green
Elm	Boxelder
Grape	Boxwood
Hollyhock	Conifers (arborvitae, spruce, pine, fir, yew, juniper)
Horsechestnut	Dogwood
Linden[2], American	Euonymus
Lombardy poplar	Green ash
London planetree	Hickory, shagbark
Malus spp. (crabapple[1], etc.)	Holly
Maple, Norway, Japanese	Lilac
Mountain ash	Magnolia
Prunus spp. (flowering cherry, etc.)	Maple, red, silver
Rose	Mulberry
Sassafras	Oak, white, red, scarlet, black
Walnut, black	Persimmon
Weeds (wild grape, multiflora rose, smartweed, poison ivy)	Poplar, white
[1]Susceptibility of crabapples varies with variety	Sweet gum
[2]Tilia tomentosa 'Sterling' and Tilia Americana 'Legend' are less susceptible Than other lindens	Yellow poplar (tuliptree)

Pollinators are an important part of gardens

From DubuqueToday Tidbits May 19, 2020

A thriving backyard garden requires homeowners to take steps to ensure the garden has the best environment in which to grow and thrive. The right tools and components, including trowels, rakes, soil, amendments, and fertilizer, can help gardeners create beautiful spaces.

It's also important that pollinators are made to feel welcome in the garden. The United States Department of Agriculture reports that one-third of all agricultural output depends on pollinators. The USDA notes that insects and other animal pollinators are vital to the production of healthy crops for food, fibers, edible oils, medicines, and other products. Pollinators also are essential for maintaining habitats and ecosystems that many wild animals rely on for food and shelter.

The U.S. Forest Service says that, without pollinators, the human race and all of the earth's terrestrial ecosystems would not survive. Pollination done the natural way often yields large, flavorful fruits.

Pollinators are make-or-break components of large-scale agriculture, and they're just as important in private home gardens. The Pollinator Partnership, an organization that works to protect pollinators and their habitats across North America, says pollinators include bees, butterflies, beetles, birds, and bats. These animals travel from plant to plant carrying pollen on their bodies.

The following are some ways to maintain healthy pollinator habitats.

- Consider the soil and types of plants that will thrive in it before choosing what to plant. Fix drainage issues and plant with sunlight in mind.
- Vary the colors and shapes of plants to attract a greater array of pollinators. Plant flowers close to vegetable gardens to attract pollinators.
- Group plants together when planting to more effectively attract pollinators.
- Select plants that flower at different times of the year so that nectar and pollen sources are available year-round.
- Whenever possible, choose native plants.
- Avoid the use of pesticides.
- Provide a water source for pollinators, such as a shallow dish with stones half-submerged for perching.

Pollinators are important for gardens, whether those gardens are commercial operations or small backyard plots. Allow pollinators to share spaces and be mindful of behaviors that can threaten their survival.

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The Environmental Impact of Lawns

From a Blog on gogreen.org

As summer winds down, many of us can look back at fond memories in our backyards or in the yards of our friends or family. You may have attended a BBQ or pool party. Your kids may have ran through the sprinklers in your front yard or tossed a frisbee for the dog on your lawn. All carefree summer fun, right? Maybe not. Does a green lawn equal a green choice for the environment?

What's Wrong with Lawns?

You may have guessed that given how many resources people pour into their lawns to keep them green, they aren't actually that green in practice. In order to keep lawns green, lots of water is used. Many lawn owners also use harmful pesticides and herbicides on their grass. These toxins can end up in our waterways and in our food. And lawn maintenance releases greenhouse gases, such as with the fuel needed for lawnmowers.

Study on the Effects of Turf Fertilizer

A new study on the effects of turf lawns by the University of California, Irvine was recently released in Geophysical Research Letters. The study looked at the impact of fertilizer used to keep lawn grass green and lush.

Researchers looked at ornamental and athletic fields at four California parks and measured how much carbon dioxide was sequestered, how much nitrous oxide was released through fertilization and how much carbon dioxide was released through maintenance. They found that ornamental lawns, such as picnic areas, release a large quantity of harmful nitrous oxide. However, those emissions were offset by the carbon dioxide taken in by plants. However, athletic fields don't take in as much carbon and often require more carbon emitting maintenance. The study found these lawns to be much more harmful to the environment.

Study on the Effects of Watering Lawns

Another study on the effects of lawns was conducted by Cristina Milesi and her team at the NASA Ames Research Center in California. Milesi's study looked at the effects of lawns across America. She noticed that most of the grass lawns in the United States are not native to their area. The ecological impact of a lawn grows tremendously when the grass has to be imported and sustained in an unnatural environment.

Milesi explains, "A lawn isn't a big deal in the northeast, but when you recreate that same landscape out West, it becomes a major ecological issue because the only way to grow those grasses is with high use of water and nitrogen fertilizer. An individual, quarter-acre lawn isn't a big ecological influence, but adding up all those quarter-acres for everyone in the country . . . We suspected that the ecological impact could be pretty big."

For the first part of the study, Milesi used a computer simulation to test the impact of watering your lawn based on a fixed amount or watering your lawn based on weather and evaporation rates. The reason Milesi looked at the amount of water used for lawn irrigation is because decreasing water tables and increased water waste is a large issue in America and around the world.

Milesi explained her findings saying, "If people watered according to what the meteorology indicated, factoring in temperature and humidity, for example, then it would improve irrigation efficiency—use less water—in the Southeast, where humidity is high. But in the West, there is so much sun and humidity is so low that plants can evaporate a lot more than 1 inch of water a week."

With her simulation's findings, Milesi was able to figure out how much water the US would need to keep lawns looking good. She estimated that 200 gallons of fresh water, suitable for drinking, per person per day would be required to upkeep lawns. That's equivalent to about 400 water bottles per person per day just for lawns.

Study on the Effects of Carbon

The next part of Milesi's study looked at the carbon emissions and carbon intake of lawns. She did this by simulating different amounts of fertilizer, watering schedules and whether cut grass was left or removed from the lawn.

Milesi made a strange discovery. She found that a well-watered and fertilized lawn could actually be a carbon sink - the lawn could take in and store carbon that would otherwise be polluting the air. The study revealed that if people left …….

End of Reprint of April 2020 Issue 84 Volume 2 Page 5

Iowa's Fastest Flying Falcon!

One of Iowa's most fascinating and rare birds of prey is currently getting down to the serious business of nesting. The Iowa DNR worked with many partners for many years to reintroduce this species into Iowa and help get it removed from the federal endangered species list. Today Iowa plays host to between 15-20 nesting pairs around the state. We're celebrating the start of another nesting year by sharing some interesting facts with you all!

The peregrine is one of three falcons which nests here in Iowa. The other two falcons are the small and colorful American Kestrel and the small and fierce Merlin. Merlins were thought to no longer nest in Iowa until a couple of active nest sites were discovered a few years ago.

The scientific name for peregrine falcon is *Falco peregrinus*, which means wandering falcon. During migration, peregrines may travel great distances. Peregrines nesting in the Arctic are known to migrate to Central and South America during the winter.

Peregrine falcons are a thing of nightmares to their preferred prey – other birds. In pursuit of prey, they can fly 60 mph straight forward and when in a hunting diving, called a stoop, can reach up to 200-240 mph! This makes them one of the fastest animals on the planet.
Peregrine falcons have been trained to be used in falconry hunting for over a thousand years and in fact, captive breeding by falconers was instrumental in the conservation and restoration of the species after its population was devastated by the chemical DDT. The peregrine falcon was taken off of the U.S. Threatened and Endangered Species List in 1999.

Many peregrine falcons in Iowa and elsewhere nest on tall buildings in urban centers or the large smokestacks of energy plants. They successfully use these structures because they resemble their natural nesting grounds – the faces of cliffs and bluffs.

Nests are simply a scrape in the dirt or gravel of a cliff ledge, building alcove, or nest structure.

Breeding pairs tend to be monogamous throughout their lifespan and return to the same nesting location year after year. Two nest sites in Iowa are on prominent municipal buildings: the Dubuque courthouse (which has a webcam) and the Iowa State Capitol Building!

Iowa is incredibly privileged to have these magnificent birds share the state with us! Be sure to check out the Dubuque Courthouse webcam to get a front row seat to this falcon family's next few months. Photos are courtesy of Dubuque County Government.

To see the nesting box and the fledglings, scan the internet for "Dubuque Courthouse webcam"

Events Calendar

Swiss Valley Nature Center/EB Lyons/Audubon Society/Hurstville Calendars

All programs are subject to weather conditions. To check for changes to this schedule, check the websites in the list of organizations below. The programs are open to the public and are designed for people of all ages unless otherwise described. For additional info or preregistration contact one of the following depending on the program's location:

Swiss Valley Nature Center, 13606 Swiss Valley Road Peosta, IA 52068, 563-556-6745. www.dubuquecounty.org or you can search for "Swiss Valley Nature Center Facebook".
EB Lyons Interpretive Center, 8991 Bellevue Heights, Dubuque, IA at 563-556-0620. www.minesofspain.org
Hurstville Interpretive Center, 18670 63rd Street, Maquoketa, IA at 563- 652-3783. www.jacksonccb.com
Dubuque Audubon Society, P.O. Box 3174, Dubuque, IA 52004-3174, 563-582-215. www.audubondubuque.org/

There were no conservation events listed on any of the websites that we monitor. I'm assuming due to the Coronavirus.

Other Events Calendar

Summer Farmer's Market Saturday, 7am-noon 1300 Iowa Street

Company Sponsors

Please support our local sponsors

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798 Cedar Cross Rd

MidWest One
895 Town Clock Plaza

Artistic Cleaners
107 Locust St.

Brennan Baumhover Ins.
2615 Dodge St.

Dennis Baumhover Ins.
2615 Dodge St.

Behr's Funeral Home
1491 Main St.

Breitbach's Country Dining
563 Balltown Rd.

Cedar Cross Overhead Door
1040 Cedar Cross Rd

Citizens State Bank
P.O. Box 50
New Vienna

Copper Kettle
2987 JACKSON ST

Dupaco Credit Union
P.O. Box 179

DuTrac Credit Union
3465 Asbury

Environmental Management Services
5170 Wolff Rd

Sherry Horsfield
Farm Bureau Insurance
20214 E Pleasant Grove Rd

Home+Floor Show 1475 Associates Dr.

The Friedman Group
880 Locust St.
P. O. Box 1780

Leo H. Frueh, Consulting Forester
2230 Chippewa Dr.

Hendricks Feed Co.
880 Central

Herbst Upholstery & Auto
76 Main St

IIW Engineers & Surveyors P.C.
4155 Pennsylvania

Kaufmann Painting
17368 S John Deere Rd.

Klauer Optical
1705 Delhi St.

Miller Flooring
Box 125 New Vienna

Nature's Way Lawn Care
440 Burch St.

Oky Doky Food Mart
P.O. Box 300

O'Meara Custom Products
8915 N. Badger Rd.

Organic Valley
Dickeyville WI

Pfohl's Blinds, Drapes Inc.
335 West 1st Street

Pregler Electric
216th Ave LaMotte IA

Premier Bank
1975 JFK Rd.

Schuster Heating & Pump
15674 Key City Lane

Schuster Tree Service
7273 Schueller Heights Rd

Schwartz Plumbing
4904 Asbury

Sisters of Saint Francis
3390 Windsor Ave.

Skip Breithbach Feed
Balltown, IA

Spahn & Rose Lumber Co.
1101 Jackson St.

Stecklein Tree Service
Epworth, IA

Steve's Ace Home and Garden
3350 JFK
200 South Locust

TFM Co.
2040 Kerper Blvd.

Therapeutic Massage
2255 JFK Road

U.S. Bank
270 West 7th

Weber Paper Co.
4300 Chevenelle Dr.

White Front Feed & Seed
4290 Dodge St.

White Water Native Seeds
Epworth, IA

Zuccaro Dental
895 Main St Suite 900

Board Members 2020

Name	Title	563 except as noted	Name	563 except as noted
Mark Kaufman	Vice President	879-3452	Gerda Preston Hartman	588-0649
Pat Hayes	President	542-2960	Whitey Kemp	582-7752
Connie Kintzle	Treasurer	583-3907	Punkie Birkel	
Bob Walton	Secretary		Dan Simon	583-0514
Tom Klinge	Newsletter	815-747-7786	Paul Kaufman	583-5030
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Reminders:

The next open meetings will tentatively be held **Tuesday September 8, 2020** and **October 13, 2020,** on the second floor of the Oky-Doky at 250 West 1st street. All Members are invited and everyone is encouraged to attend.

Clean out your bird houses and if you have mice in them you should leave them open.

Check the event calendars for some exciting things to do.

Support your local Farmer's Markets. Support our local Sponsors.

This months insert - None

This month's focus - None

Change your furnace filter.

Recycle whenever possible.

Visit our web page at www.dbqccs.org
- OR -
Visit our Facebook page:
https://www.facebook.com/pages/Dubuque-County-Conservation-Society/421655257997596
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