



A Year of Living Sustainably

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Welcome and introduction



Ice-breaker: Ask participants to get into small groups or pairs and do 3 things:

1. Tell us where your favorite greenspace in Cincinnati is! It can be inside or outside, your garden or a public park, where do YOU like to enjoy nature?
2. Share your expectations for the presentation. What brought you here today?
3. Share how your pledge from last month went. For those who were not here last month, share a pro-environment behavior you're struggling with.

Have people report back about their conversations.



Invite your audience to play a word association game. Ask them to call out words that they think of when they hear ‘green’, ‘solar power’, ‘air pollution’, ‘sustainable city’.
(You may want to make a note of some of their responses)

When you said ‘sustainable city’ did any one say Cincinnati? If so, ask them why. If not, ask the audience why not?

The City of Cincinnati and the OES in particular would like for Cincinnati to be model for our peers in the Midwest when it comes to sustainability.

Ask for a show of hands: who knows what the ‘2018 Green Cincinnati Plan’ is? Ask a brave volunteer to explain it, or do so yourself:

The 2018 GCP is the city’s roadmap to 80% fewer greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. There are a lot of businesses, non-profits, government officials, religious and academic institutions working on this, but in order to achieve this ambitious goal we need YOU (the audience). Which is why we came up with the ‘Year of Living Sustainably’ campaign.



Introduce the ‘Year of Living Sustainably’ Campaign. Our goal is to provide individuals with the tools they need to connect with the 2018 update of the Green Cincinnati Plan. One of the ‘measurable goals’ of the GCP is to ‘increase by 10% the number of people who can name 3 things they are doing to protect the environment.’ More on this later.

There are lots of ways to get involved:

1. Pledge to try a new sustainable behavior for 30 days. You’ll be entered in a raffle to win a prize and at the end of the month you’ll be sent a survey asking about your experience. After that it’s up to you if you want to continue your new behavior– the idea is to find something that works for you and your lifestyle, so if your January pledge didn’t work out, you’ll get to try something new in February! Hopefully, by the end of 12 months you’ll have found AT LEAST 3 pro-environment behaviors that you enjoy doing.
2. Educate yourself and others. You can attend an event like this one, organize an event at your work place, school, or community gathering, or even **host your own YOLS event – a potluck, a movie screening, a neighborhood clean up!** OES is happy to provide whatever resources and support we can! You can also get daily tips on our monthly topics by following up on Facebook (@GreenCincinnatiPlan) or Twitter (@living_year).
3. Recognize or become a community ‘Leader in Sustainability’. Take on a role in your

community helping to 'green' existing events (i.e. providing recycling bins, limiting single-use plastics) and even throwing a few of your own (i.e. a clothing swap, a neighborhood clean up). If you know someone who is already doing great things to help their environment and community, let us know by nominating them for a 'Leader in Sustainability' award!

Invite participants to define what 'sustainability' means. (From Wikipedia:

"Sustainability is the process of maintaining change in a balanced environment, in which the exploitation of resources, the direction of investments, the orientation of technological development and institutional change are all in harmony and enhance both current and future potential to meet human needs and aspirations. For many in the field, sustainability is defined through the following interconnected domains or pillars: environment, economic and social.")



This month's topic is 'Gardening/Nature Connection'. We all interact with nature on a daily basis to some extent or another, so we wanted to dedicate March to examining, celebrating, and elevating those interactions.

Ask participants to share with their neighbor: How do you interact with nature? What do your daily interactions with nature look like? Have a few people report back.

There are a myriad of different ways to interact with nature, and that relationship is as unique as each of us. The reason we're saying 'greenspace' instead of garden or yard or park or outdoors is because nature is and can be quite literally everywhere, all around us, all the time.

So why did we choose to combine nature connection and gardening? In my experience, one of the most intimate relationships you can have with nature is through gardening: it requires us to have an awareness of the tiniest changes in temperature, precipitation, and the intricacies of our eco-system that can sometimes get lost in the hustle and bustle of our daily lives. (Bonus points if you're growing something to eat – the symbolism of nurturing a plant that will in turn sustain you is nothing short of awe-inspiring.)

Today we're going to discuss:

- **What greenspaces are available to you**
- **How best to utilize and care for greenspaces**
- **How you can bring nature into your own space (whether you have 10 acres or just a window)**



What greenspaces are available for everyone?

Tap into your audience's collective knowledge by hanging four papers around the room and distributing markers. The papers should be labelled:

Indoor spaces

Outdoor spaces

Educational Spaces

Community Gardens

Give participants 3 minutes to mill around and write down places they know of that fit each of the descriptions. Places can go in more than one category (ex. The Civic Garden Center is educational, and has indoor and outdoor spaces) and we're going to limit the locations to within an hour drive from downtown (to keep things a little simpler).

When the 3 minutes is up, hang the posters somewhere where they can all be seen by everyone. Ask your audience to have a look at all the greenspaces available to them and allow people to inquire about spaces they aren't familiar with (if you're unfamiliar yourself, ask whoever wrote it to fill you in).

(Optional: You can also print out and cut up the species on the last two slides and provide a space for people to designate them as native an invasive. You can address their answers when you get to slide 7)

Here are some ideas to help you get started:

Indoor spaces

The Krohn Conservatory: <https://www.cincinnatiiparks.com/krohn/>
(pictured, bottom right)

The Cincinnati Zoo: <http://cincinnatiiparks.com/>

Outdoor spaces

Any of the Great Parks of Hamilton County: <https://www.greatparks.org/>
(Oakleaf Trail at Miami Whitewater Park, top left)

Any of the Cincinnati Parks: <https://www.cincinnatiiparks.com/>

Educational Spaces

The Civic Garden Center: <https://www.civicgardencenter.org/>
(Green Learning Station pictured bottom left)

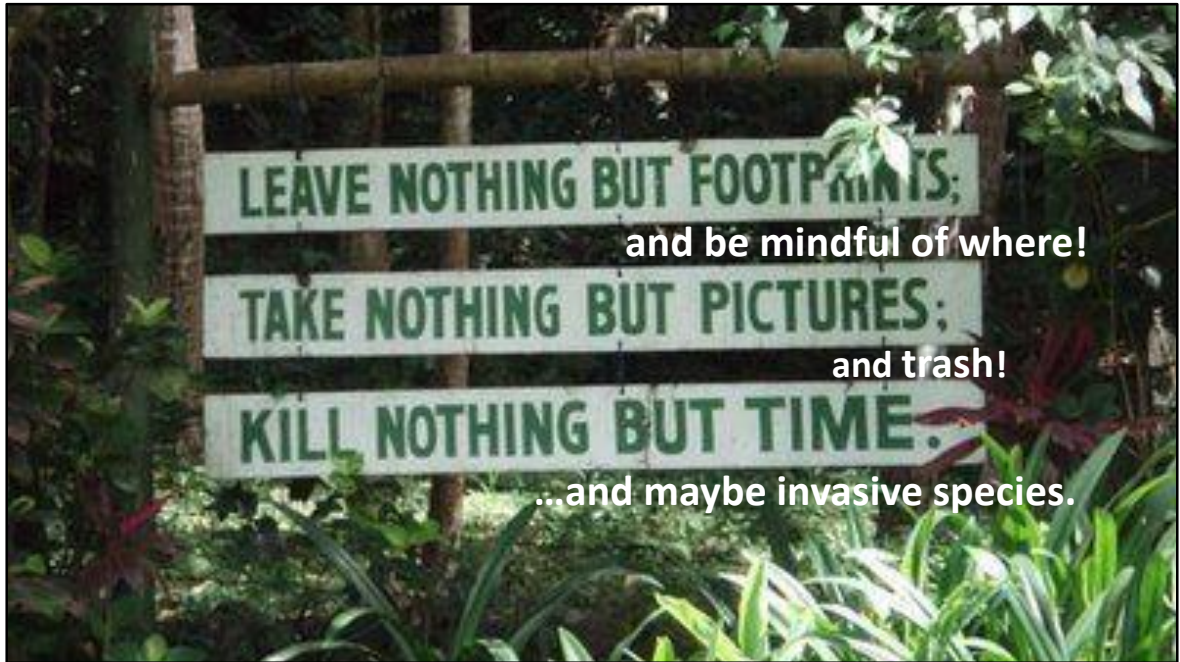
Green Acres: <https://www.green-acres.org/>

Community Gardens*

Melrose Community Garden: <https://wearewalthills.org/community-resources/greenspaces/>

The Village Green: <http://www.northside.net/GetInvolved/VillageGreen.shtml> (pictured top right)

**The Civic Garden Center has a handy tool to help you find a community garden near you: <https://www.civicgardencenter.org/gardens/community-gardens/>*



How best to utilize and care for shared greenspaces.

So many of you have probably heard the saying, “Leave nothing but footprints*, take nothing but pictures**, kill nothing but time***.”

It a popular saying because it’s a good one – these are generally good guidelines for environmental stewardship.

Leave nothing but footprints: Who doesn’t love a picnic? Just be aware that whatever trash you bring into the woods needs to come back out with you. Another place this applies: growing up my mom had a habit of throwing uneaten apple cores out the car window because they’re ‘biodegradable, so it’s harmless’. My mother was right about most of the advice she gave me growing up, but not about this. It draws the wildlife that might consider that food a snack close to traffic where they might end up as roadkill.

Take nothing but pictures: It might seem nice to pick flowers or take a shell or rock as a souvenir, but these things are part of our flora and fauna’s natural habitat. Just like you wouldn’t take something nice you saw at a friend’s house, don’t ‘borrow’ from Mother

Nature.

Kill nothing but time: And try to kill as much of it as possible in public greenspaces! Not only is spending time outdoors good for you, it's good for nature, too. With Cincinnati Parks and Great Parks of Hamilton County, the money tends to follow the people – the more utilized a park, the more likely they are to invest in it (though they both do so on shoestring budgets, so be sure to purchasing a park pass and consider making a donation or volunteering next time you visit!) Reporting broken playground equipment, quickly addressing graffiti or illegal dumping, and visiting some of the less popular parks can all help keep our greenspaces green!

Feedback form for Cincinnati Parks: <https://www.cincinnatiiparks.com/website-feedback-old/>

Feedback for Great Parks of Hamilton County: <https://www.greatparks.org/contact>

However, I want to modify this saying for 2019.

***and be mindful where you step!** Most plants (besides grass) don't hold up well when trampled on...so stick to the path and be respectful of the flora and fauna that were there first

****and trash!** To redeem my mother in your eyes, here is some valuable wisdom that I think applies, 'I don't care who made the mess, I care who's going to clean it up.' You made sure to take all your trash with you, that's great! Consider taking some of the trash that others have left, too!

*****and maybe invasive species.** It's easier to identify and eliminate invasive species in your own greenspaces, but if you're really itching to pick some flowers on your next trip outdoors, consider volunteering with the Cincinnati Wildflower Preservation Society (<http://cincywildflower.org/>), Greenacres (<https://www.green-acres.org/>), Millcreek Alliance (<http://www.groundworkcincinnati.org/getinvolved>) or Great Parks (<https://www.greatparks.org/get-involved/volunteer>).

(Optional: take some time to address the native and invasive species that you designated earlier)



- Use less lawn
- Go au naturale
- Bloom through the seasons
- Encourage Pollinators

How to best utilize and care for your greenspaces.

Here's an actual home in Cincinnati that I think does a lot of things really well. What do you think those things are?

Less lawn

Introduce a grass alternative (some people like groundcovers like clover or Corsican mint) or dedicate some of your yard to flower beds, shrubs, herbs, or ornamental grasses. This is especially good for slanted spaces because they have good drainage and are already tough to mow. It'll reduce mowing time, provide food and habitats for native pollinators (while deterring pests like Japanese Beetles), and make your neighbors green with envy!

Aim for grass that's 2 or 3 inches and keep your mower blades sharp to prevent decaying brown tips.

Go au naturale

Avoid pesticides and chemical-based fertilizers.

You can double your eco-points and save money by using a compost pile (food AND lawn waste) to make your own fertilizer. Be aware of the needs of what you're planting – planting native species with attention to their soil moisture and light needs will naturally reduce the need for fertilizer.

Avoid pesticides by remembering that not all bugs are bad bugs. Think about spider-bros or praying mantises; they may look creepy, but they can do your garden a lot of good. In fact, the cure for too much of one bug (aphids, flies, etc.) is usually another bug that eats that one, and pesticides that eradicate a species further disrupt the healthy, natural balance your garden needs. Similarly, rethink weeds. Some 'weeds' like dandelions and clover are actually great for your lawn and the creatures that live there.

Favor traps or barriers over chemicals.

Target your approach to the specific pest (don't broadly apply a product).

Bloom through the season

Plant native species and diversify! Combine plants that bloom (or in gardens, ripen) in different seasons and a balance of perennials, annuals, shrubs, and trees to ensure your garden looks great throughout the year and to minimize the impact of disease and infestation. Once you know what you want to grow, research companion plants!

***Ask if anyone has heard of the 3 Sisters Technique** – Native Americans often planted squash, corn, and beans in close proximity because it increased the rate of successful growth. The corn stalk provided a pole for the beans to climb, the beans introduced nitrogen into the soil, and the squash created groundcover that prevented weeds from growing. (And for those interested: corn, beans, and squash contain complex carbohydrates, essential fatty acids and all eight essential amino acids, which allowed the Native American tribes that used this technique to thrive on a plant-based diet!)*

Know your pollinators!

Back to our word association game. What do you think of when I say 'pollinators'?

Most people's first answer is bees or butterflies – and these pollinators are a valuable part of their ecosystems! But it's important to remember that moths, beetles, wasps, flies, hummingbirds, and a variety of bees (that is, not just honey bees) are native to this region – and many of them pollinate plants when and where bees can't. Learn about the various different types of pollinators from Greg Torres at the Civic Garden Center!



Inviting nature into your space.

For this part of the discussion, we're going to break into 3 groups (for audiences over 20 people, break into 6 groups and have 2 groups discuss each topic). Divide participants into equal-sized groups (have them count off by 3) and assign each group one of the following topics:

- Bringing nature indoors (Tips for people with limited outside space, growing plants inside)
- Keeping spaces eco-friendly (avoiding pesticides, start composting, choose native species, eliminate invasive species, conserve water)
- Creating a habitat (encouraging wildlife, eliminating chemical-based products)
- Foraging and growing your own food (companion planting, cooking and growing by season)

Give each group 2 pieces of paper, one labelled 'suggestions' and one labeled

'questions'. Each group will have 3 minutes to discuss and brainstorm their ideas and questions about their topic. After 3 minutes, the group will rotate to a different topic (this will happen twice so that each group spends 3 minutes at each topic). At the end of the 12 minutes, participants can choose 1 topic that they would like to continue the conversation about (allow groups to self-select around their topic of interest). Give the groups 3 minutes to re-visit a topic and then open the room up to conversation. Were there any questions that didn't get answered? See if you can group-think an answer or make a note to follow up about it.

Resources on Native and Companion Plants

[Wikipedia List of Companion Plants](#)
[OSU Plants for Pollinators Resources](#)
[Cincinnati Zoo Native Plant Guide](#)
[Ohio Pollinator Oasis Native Seed Packet](#)
[Ohio Dept of Natural Resources Invasive Species List](#)

Plant for Pollinators/NWF Certified Wildlife Habitat

[National Wildlife Foundation Certification](#)
[Cincinnati Zoo's Plant for Pollinators](#)

Find Local Food

[CGC Community Garden Directory](#)
[CORV Local Food Guide](#)
[Ohio Farm Bureau 'What's in Season?'](#)
[OU Seasonal Schedule of Wild Edible Plants](#)
[Nature Center Foraging Group](#)
[Local Harvest CSA Database](#)
[Falling Fruit Forage Map](#)

Here are some resources to help you determine and fulfill your pledge!

Wikipedia List of Companion Plants:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_companion_plants

OSU Plants for Pollinator Resources: <http://u.osu.edu/beelab/native-plants-for-native-pollinators/>

Cincinnati Zoo Native Plant Guide: <http://cincinnati-zoo.org/horticulture/native-plants/>

Ohio Pollinator Oasis Seed Packet: <https://www.opnseed.com/ohio-state-beekeepers-association>

Ohio Department of Natural Resources Invasive Species List:

<http://ohiodnr.gov/invasiveplants>

NWF Certification: <https://www.nwf.org/certify>

Cincinnati Zoo Plant for Pollinators Certification:

<http://cincinnati-zoo.org/horticulture/plant-for-pollinators/>

Civic Garden Center Community Garden Database:

<https://www.civiggardencentre.org/gardens/community-gardens/>

CORV Local Food Guide: <https://www.eatlocalcorv.org/>
Ohio Farm Bureau 'What's in Season': <https://ofbf.org/whats-in-season/>
Ohio University Seasonal Schedule of Wild Edible Plants:
https://www.ohio.edu/cas/plantbio/research/edible_schedule.cfm
Cincinnati Nature Center Edible Plants and Foraging Group:
<https://www.cincynature.org/events-and-programs/clubs-and-groups/edible-plants-and-foraging-group-20/>
Local Harvest CSA Database: <https://www.localharvest.org/csa/>
Falling Fruit Forage Map: <http://fallingfruit.org/>

These are never exhaustive lists, follow us on Facebook and Twitter for daily tips and to share your resources!

A Year of Living Sustainably

I pledge to...

*help build a sustainable,
equitable, and resilient
Cincinnati!*



Building a Sustainable, Equitable & Resilient Cincinnati.
2018 Green Cincinnati Plan
Visit www.cincinnati-oh.gov/oes to learn more.



Ask the audience to take a moment to think about a pledge that they want to commit to, then share it in their small group. Don't forget to come up with a strategy to keep yourself accountable (keeping a journal, asking a friend to check on your progress or complete the pledge with you, etc.)!



White Ash (*Fraxinus Americana*)



Emerald Ash Borer (*Agrilus Plenipennis*)



Amur Honeysuckle (*Lonicera maackii*)



Northern Bush Honeysuckle (*Diervilla lonicera*)



Garlic Mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*)



Scarlet Beebalm (*Monarda didyma*)

March 3rd – 8th is Native Species Awareness Week!



Asian Long-horned beetle (*Anoplophora glabripennis*)