

Litzsinger Road Ecology Center

Community Newsletter

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Awaiting Spring

By Bob Coulter

Now that we have passed the shortest days of the year, we can look past these cold winter mornings with the hope of a new spring. Just as the seasons cycle around and each year brings something new, the Litzsinger staff will be changing with the seasons. As you know, Heather Wells-Sweeney has moved on to new adventures in Connecticut with her family. We are currently recruiting candidates to fill her position and bring new talents to the team. If you know of anyone who would be good for this (Think: Is this the person I want to work with when I am doing field labs?), please ask them to apply for the School Partnership Coordinator position through the Garden's web site or have them contact me. While hiring is always slower than you expect, we hope to have a new school partnership coordinator on board by spring.



Along with Heather's departure, we are also looking forward to a couple of "junior staff" arriving. Both Jennifer Brown (our naturalist) and Malinda Slagle (our restoration ecologist) will be having a visit from a native Missouri stork this spring. They will each be away for a few months, and then returning part-time for a while after that as they settle in with their expanded families.

During these transitions, we thank you in advance for your continuing support of the Center and your patience with the temporary patchwork. We think we have the major bases covered, but let us know if we're missing something. Together as volunteers, teacher partners, and staff, we have made Litzsinger into a special and in many ways a unique space in the St. Louis region. Like any ecosystem undergoing natural change, we'll be different in the new season, but just as dynamic and vibrant as before. ☪

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Upcoming LREC Events:

LREC Stream Team: Water Chemistry

February 28, 9am–noon. Please contact Malinda Slagle at (314)961-4410 if you plan to participate.

Upcoming Opportunities:

Nature's Niche: Owls

February 12, 10am–12pm at Powder Valley Conservation Nature Center. Ages 50+. For reservations please call (314)301-1500.

Native Plant School—"The Worst" Invasive Woody Plants

February 14, 1–4pm. Whitmire Wildflower Garden at Shaw Nature Reserve. \$12 (\$8 for Garden Members). Reserve your place by calling (636)451-3512.

Grow Native at Home

February 16, 9:30–11am at Rockwoods Reservation. Learn how to put native plants to work in your home landscape. For reservations please call (636)458-2236.

Re-Energy-ize Your Home

February 27, 6:30–8:30pm at EarthWays Center. Discover home improvements that can help make existing homes more comfortable, healthy, safe, and efficient. Call (314) 577-0220 to register.

Geologic Secrets of the Danville, Illinois Fossilized Forest

February 27, 7:30–9pm at the Saint Louis Zoo's Living World. Call (314) 768-5408 for more information.

Seed Statistics 2007–2008

By Malinda Slagle

One of our most important additions to our school programs at LREC has been involving students in the restoration process. We are excited to have students collecting, cleaning, and sowing native seeds, planting native plants, and killing invasive plants. These are all important steps to helping restore and understand how ecosystems work. Over 200 students total from Reform Jewish Academy 3rd grade, Ladue Middle School, Spoede 1st grade, New City 3rd grade, McGrath 2nd grade, LIONS, and College School 3rd grade participated in seed collection or cleaning this summer and fall. Additionally, this winter, every student who visited LREC from Southview School, part of the special school district, participated in sowing seeds in the Pasture Prairie. These autistic children really enjoyed the act of helping native plants grow.

With the help of staff, volunteers, and these students, we collected, cleaned and sowed over 25 pounds of native seeds of 145 different species in spring 2007–winter 2008. Our primary restoration goals were to enrich the biodiversity of prairie areas, increase native vegetation along riparian banks and gravel bars, and replace invasive species in woodland areas. This spring we will continue working with these seeds in the greenhouse to grow plants that we will plant in the ground at LREC and give to school partners for native schoolyard habitats in May. ☞



Maplewood-Richmond Heights
7th graders sowing seed in the
Pasture Prairie extension area

River des Peres Watershed Coalition Planning Forum

February 26, 2008

This invitation is taken from a River des Peres Watershed Coalition press release.

The River des Peres Watershed Coalition invites everyone – citizens, civic and municipal leaders, agency personnel – who is interested in the River des Peres and its tributaries to take part in our upcoming planning forums. Our first gathering to address the future of the Coalition will be February 26, 2008, from 6pm to 9pm at the Heman Park Community Center, 975 Pennsylvania Ave., University City. Snacks and beverages will be provided. Additional meetings, as needed, will be held on the last Tuesday of each subsequent month.

The River des Peres Watershed Coalition was formed in 2002 to advocate for the protection and restoration of the St. Louis area's largest watershed.

Encompassing the 114-square-mile area drained by the River des Peres and its many tributaries (Gravois, Deer, Black, and Engelholm Creeks, among others), the River des Peres watershed takes in much of St. Louis city, University City, Pagedale, Clayton, Richmond Heights, Webster Groves, Ladue, and 36 other municipalities. The Coalition has held regular and well-attended river cleanups and invasive plant removals at various locations in the watershed as well as developed a demonstration restoration site on Deer Creek. (For more on the Coalition, please go to www.riverdesperes.org.)

But much more needs to be done to address the needs of this abused urban watershed. The time has come for the Coalition

to take stock of itself, clarify its mission and goals, and reorganize itself to meet those goals. It is critical that this process include everyone concerned with the River des Peres watershed; it's going to take a lot of ideas and hands to assist this watershed to become, once again, what it can and should be. Please make a point to join us at the February 26 meeting, when we can get to know each other and set the direction for Coalition's future.

Please RSVP to Danelle Haake at (314)941-0489 or email riverdesperes@gmail.com. We look forward to your enthusiastic participation in creating a new strategic plan for the River des Peres Watershed Coalition. ☞



Deer Creek is part of the River des Peres watershed.

Garden Happenings

All events take place at Missouri Botanical Garden during the month of February.

January 11 through March 15

"The Birth of Coffee"

exhibition features photographs and narrative text chronicling the lives of those that plant, grow, and pick coffee throughout the world. Sponsored by Ronnoco Coffee. www.birthofcoffee.com

February 2

Backyard Bird Festival. Enjoy bird walks, adult classes, hands-on programs for kids, live birds and bird-related exhibits (8 a.m. to 1 p.m.). Pre-registration is required for classes, bird walks, and kids programs. \$15 adults, \$10 children ages 3 to 12. Call (314) 577-9506 or download a registration form at www.mobot.org/education.

February 2 through March 16

Annual Orchid Show. This year's "Storybook Classics" theme showcases 800 orchids in scenes inspired by Johnny Appleseed, Peter Rabbit, Jack and the Beanstalk, and The Secret Garden. Garden admission plus \$3. Free for members.



February 10

"Celebrate the Gospel," the Garden's annual gospel music celebration features Mardra Thomas and the Glad Tidings Quintet in a tribute to Mahalia Jackson and other great gospel singers of the 20th century. 3 p.m. Shoenberg Theater, Ridgway Center. Limited seating first-come, first-served. Included with admission or membership.

February 16, 17 & 18

George Washington Carver Days highlight the life and legacy of one of the world's foremost scientists and educators, and a native Missourian. Family activities include storytelling Saturday at 11 a.m.; children's question and answer sessions with "Carver" Sunday and Monday at 11 a.m.; "Listening to the Still Small Voice," an award-winning performance of Carver's life by Paxton Williams, Sunday and Monday at 1 and 3 p.m.; a "Jesup Wagon" movable school; free shuttle to the Carver Garden (weather permitting); and sweet potato and peanut dishes in the Sassafras café. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Included with admission or membership.

Photo by John Sullivan
<http://PDphoto.org>

February 23 & 24

"Sugared, Spiced and Everything Iced." Displays and demonstrations of sugar art on cakes and cookies exquisitely hand-decorated by local experts. A unique opportunity to learn about techniques, the latest wedding cake trends, or get ideas and tips for your own creations. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. both days. Ridgway Center. Included with admission or membership.

February 23 & 24

Gardening Blitz, a full weekend of expert gardening advice and resources. Select from an a la carte menu of 20 popular full-length gardening, art, and cooking classes. Morning and afternoon sessions. Call (314) 577-9441 to request a spring class brochure or go online to www.gardeninghelp.org and click on "Classes." Fees from \$30 to \$35; Garden member discount. Pre-registration required.

February 27

Join the Garden's **Young Friends** for an evening of coffee tasting, a cupping demonstration, "The Birth of Coffee" photo exhibition, and the "Storybook Classics" orchid show. 6 to 8 p.m. Ridgway Center. Free. Reservations are required; call (314) 577-9432.