

Litzsinger Road Ecology Center

Community Newsletter

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Out With the Old...

By Bob Coulter

As I watch out the window, the last remains of my old, flood-ravaged house are being trucked away. Useful items are being held for recycling, thanks to the hard work Mary Voges has put into the project, but inevitably, some things just need to "go on their way."

The same holds true for our professional practice: While many elements of our work have value and should be brought forward into a new school year, there are always aspects to improve. As you look ahead to the summer, we encourage you to find the best professional development opportunities for your continuing growth. Here at the Litzsinger Road Ecology Center, we will be offering three free week-long teacher institutes. Perhaps one is right for you, or for one of your colleagues down the hall:

Sustainable Schoolyards: If you and a colleague are ready to start a native plant project on your school grounds, Sustainable Schoolyards will provide the training and support you need to build a successful project with your students. During the school year, your kids can learn about native plants during their field studies here, and apply what they know to improve your school grounds.

St Louis Ecology: If you enjoy bringing your kids to LREC but feel like your own understanding of ecology could stand an upgrade, this is the workshop for you. Field and classroom activities will help you to feel more comfortable with your kids on site next year, and ready to take on more challenging investigations.

Mapping Your Community: For teachers of students in the upper elementary grades and beyond, our annual mapping institute offers an opportunity to learn use computer mapping tools (GIS) to investigate issues in and around the St. Louis region. You'll leave with a curriculum project developed and a school site license for the GIS software.

Check the web site at www.litzsinger.org for more details and registration information. We look forward to seeing you here this summer. ☞

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Upcoming LREC Events:

Volunteer Educator Enrichment: Cool Winter Field Investigations

February 20, 12–2pm. At the Barn.
Call Martha at (314)442-6717 if you
plan to attend.

Upcoming Opportunities:

Backyard Bird Festival

February 7, 7:30am–2pm. At the
Garden. Guided walks, classes, and
exhibits for young and old, novice
and advanced birder. \$18 per
person; \$15 Garden members. Pre-
registration required; (314)577-9506
or www.mobot.org.

Native Plant School

*Native Landscaping Part 1: Planning
and Design.* February 12, 1–4pm. At
Shaw Nature Reserve. \$12 (\$8 for
Garden Members). Reserve your
place by calling (636)451-3512.

Happy Birthday Darwin!

February 12, 7pm. At the Garden.
Join three professors who specialize
in evolution, biology, and ecology to
discuss genetics and human
evolution, birds of the Galápagos
Islands, and religious naturalism in
celebration of Charles Darwin's
200th birthday. Free. More
information at www.mobot.org.

Gardening Blitz

February 21 & 22. At the Garden.
Select from an ala carte menu the
Garden's most popular full-length
classes. Call (314)577-9441 or visit
[www.mobot.org/gardeninghelp/
blitz.shtml](http://www.mobot.org/gardeninghelp/blitz.shtml)



Photo by Eddie Jones.

Green Deconstruction or Where Did Bob's House Go?

By Mary Voges

Many of you have been watching the “deconstruction” of Bob’s house here at LREC. As you know, in September the house was flooded so badly that a decision was made to tear it down. Wise decision...it sat in a flood plain, and as we all know “It’s called a flood plain because it plainly floods!”

Once it was decided to demolish the home, we asked ourselves how we could accomplish this task with the least amount of materials going to the landfill. This would require thinking “green,” and would provide a great opportunity for us to learn and act! Many phone calls and emails later, we found the perfect contacts and organizations to “Git-R-Done.”

We connected with ReStore through Jim Jones, who had previously worked with Habitat for Humanity. ReStore (www.habitatstl.org/restore) is an organization that serves as an outlet for reusable but discarded items, enabling people to purchase building materials at substantial savings, while providing financial support for Habitat for Humanity St. Louis. We had an entire house of reusable items! Where I saw demolition and trash, they saw reusable construction materials and building supplies! The process began.

Jim then connected us with Bellon Wrecking (you know the DEMO Man artwork on Vandeventer and Highway 40?...that’s them!), and the demo ball started rolling.

Don Bellon and his crew did the dirty work, removing the asphalt shingles, sorting the wood for recycling, and working to limit the amount of demolition to go to the landfill.

Not only will a large amount of the house be reused by ReStore, but quite a bit will be recycled by Waste Management (www.wm.com). Carrie Edwards at Waste Management arranged for the recycling of asphalt, concrete, and outdoor tiles, as well as any extra wood, metal, or asphalt shingles. Some of these items are headed to Waste Management for use on site. And some, such as the asphalt shingles, are going to EcoRecycling. The shingles will be melted down and used by construction companies for pavement base.

On January 6, the house started coming down as ReStore volunteers pulled, pushed, and yanked all usable and saleable items out. From the doors to the fixtures, to each and every square-head nail in the flooring, They worked for two weeks in the cold, windowless house salvaging everything from the doors to the fixtures. They even saved every square-head nail in the flooring! Look at the list of items they took out and are reselling at ReStore (see box on page 3). These people are incredible, and we are grateful for their time and dedication to this project.

See **Deconstruction**, page 3

Deconstruction, from page 2

Then Cheryl Robinson, the Garden Coordinator for the Maplewood-Richmond Heights Elementary School, approached us. She and some volunteers took the exterior walls and some wood for use at the elementary school. They are planning to use them to build a tool shed and gazebo for their outdoor gardens.

What little is left will be sent to the landfill. Items such as used drywall and insulation cannot be recycled at this time. Maybe someday...better yet, let's build with recyclable materials now!

The deconstruction should be completed by January 28 and what will be left is what some may consider just a piece of



Photo by Eddie Jones.

empty ground, but to all of us at LREC, it is a fresh new canvas, an opportunity to create a wet prairie, a rain garden, or both! Stay tuned... ☞

Salvaged for Habitat for Humanity's Restore

- windows
- Interior doors
- garage doors
- cherry trim
- fireplace mantle
- crown molding
- light fixture
- fireplace
- ceiling fans
- Bi-fold doors
- closet shelving
- cedar closet
- freezer
- exterior doors
- storm windows
- wood wall paneling
- cherry flooring
- square nails
- oak flooring
- recessed lighting
- metal door & frame
- gutters
- toilets
- bathtub
- vanities and sink tops
- bathroom lighting
- mirror/medicine cabinet
- wash sink
- furnaces
- gas fireplace
- shutters
- water tank
- wood from outside deck
- house frame
- lumber from the loft above the garage

In addition...

Over thirty sheets of the plywood and batten exterior walls, along with decking wood were taken down and are to be reused by the Maplewood-Richmond Heights Elementary School.

Copper piping is being reused by Half-Past Treasures (a charitable organization in Eureka that works to provide the local community, especially local flood victims, with furniture, appliances, and other items).

Watch the Witch Hazel for a Happy February!

By Malinda Slagle

Got the February blahs? Get on down to LREC and check out the blooming Ozark witch hazel (*Hamamelis vernalis*) on the berm near the green house. Witch hazel is a native shrub of the Ozarks. It blooms starting in January and usually blooms through March. It has a lovely musky scent and attracts insect pollinators such as honeybees (*Apis mellifera*) on warm days. Witch hazel lives naturally along stream banks in full sun to part shade and provides great erosion control. It has bright yellow fall leaves which often stick around through the winter, making it a good plant for screening. It grows six to ten feet tall and eight to fifteen feet wide. Witch hazel is also an interesting plant because of its medicinal uses. Native Americans used an extract of the leaves, barks, and stems of witch hazel for treatment of sprains, bruises, and inflammation.



Ozark witch hazel in bloom.

Photo: The Dow Gardens Archive, Dow Gardens, www.bugwood.org.

The Missouri Botanical Garden declared witch hazel a plant of merit. Plants of merit are non-invasive plants that will grow reliably in the St. Louis area, requiring little water or soil amendments, and displaying great ornamental qualities. Witch hazel is widely available at local

nurseries if you're interested in planting it in your schoolyard or home garden. ☞

Reference:

<http://www.mobot.org/gardeninghelp/plantfinder/Plant.asp?code=C920>



Henry's Garden 2009 Orchid Show

January 31 through March 15, 2009

\$3 per person (ages 3+) (in addition to Garden admission)

Free for Garden members

Experience the color, beauty, and fragrance of orchids in bloom in the middle of winter at the 2009 orchid show. *Henry's Garden* celebrates the Missouri Botanical Garden's 150th anniversary and will feature over 800 orchids from the Garden's world-renowned collection displayed in a formal Victorian setting.

Download or view transcripts of podcast or audio tour at

<http://www.mobot.org/events/orchidshow/>

Cymbidium Tom Thumb "Caliope."

Photo credit: Heather Osborn. Courtesy Missouri Botanical Garden.