

# Richland Soil and Water Conservation District

*Conservation, Education and Stewardship*

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**For Immediate Release**

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## **Richland Soil and Water Conservation District Announces Cooperator of the Year**

**MANSFIELD, Ohio**-Kingwood Center Gardens was recognized as the Richland Soil and Water Conservation District (Richland SWCD) Cooperator of the Year at the Annual Celebration held November 4, 2021.

Kingwood Center is committed to numerous conservation practices focused on protecting and preserving our County's natural resources. They effectively manage stormwater, protect and preserve soil and water resources, utilize native plants, and support wildlife while providing a great guest experience, being a good neighbor and commitment to a variety of programs. To illustrate Kingwood Center Gardens contributions to conservation and horticulture, Richland SWCD created and shared a video at the Annual Celebration. To watch the video, visit

<https://richlandswcd.net/>.

Brenda Nelson and Lindsay Rossi West accepted the Cooperator of the Year award on behalf of Kingwood Center Gardens. Kingwood Center Gardens efforts were also recognized with commendations from Senator Mark Romanchuk, Representative Marilyn John and Richland County Commissioners Darrell Banks, Cliff Mears and Tony Vero.

The first of several projects to manage stormwater started with the Shade Garden renovation.

The drainage was affecting the plants and hard paths which led Kingwood to install a rain garden with plants that can withstand water. Rocks leading to the stream help the water leaving the rain garden move slower and reduces other areas from getting too much water.

At the South lawn (on the East side of Kingwood Hall) a large water berm was added to collect and slow down water which greatly reduced the impact to the garden.

As part of the Carriage House renovation, a rain garden was created to allow water to flow into the garden using native plants and decorative grating.

When the Garden Gateway project was being planned, managing stormwater runoff was a high priority. Kingwood realized it could manage stormwater more efficiently without sacrificing beauty and continue to provide a great guest experience. Bioswales were added to collect stormwater runoff from the building, parking lot and other hard surfaces to help filter and slow the water going into the Nature Pond. The size of the Nature Pond was increased to allow precipitation to slowly release into Touby's Run. The nature pond was also recently aerated and stocked with fish.

Kingwood manages runoff from the greenhouse roof into two rain barrels housed in the basement. The precipitation is used to water plants

A bioretention area was included at the entrance to the Visitor Center. It captures runoff from the roof and terrace behind it. Guests cross over a concrete bridge to enter the Gateway Center and gardens. The attractive entry allows water to efficiently drain away. The plants can withstand dry and wet conditions and have been selected to resemble the colors of brass and its metal alloys.

To capture runoff from the new parking lot, 3 parking islands designed to serve as bioretention areas were created to capture runoff. Like at the Visitor Center, the planting colors are based around brass and its metal alloys and can withstand dry and wet conditions and slow runoff while allowing the rainwater to flow into the parking islands.

Runoff from the maintenance yard is collected to avoid pollution from entering waterways.

Kingwood guests cross the Cypress stream as they enter and exit the gardens. The original stream was opened and expanded as much as possible while allowing guests to walk further into the gardens.

Silt socks along various beds allow plants to get established and to prevent runoff.

Kingwood incorporates pollinator friendly plants throughout the gardens and has beehives.

The new perennial garden is loaded with pollinator friendly plants. Their annual displays often include plants like milkweed, which is a host plant for monarch butterflies. The new planting around the Nature Pond includes a diverse range of species which attracts many pollinators. In

addition to hybrids and species plantings, native plants have an important role at Kingwood and are viewed as “the right plant for the right area.”

The large natural areas at Kingwood house a diverse range of wildlife. The mature trees and other vegetation are an important part of Kingwood’s conservation efforts. They hope to continue to improve those areas by reducing invasive species and creating better environments for wildlife.

Educational programs and workshops Kingwood hosts include tours, youth and adult programming, horticultural workshops, wellness series, historical education, rain barrels, composting, planting tree liners and art programming. Signage explaining bioswales, The Peacock House and Storybook trail also offer educational opportunities.

Call 419.747.8686 or go to <http://richlandswcd.net/> to learn about programs and services provided by Richland SWCD.

The Richland Soil and Water Conservation District develops, implements, and assists landowners, government agencies and our partners with a wide range of natural resource conservation programs.

Programs and assistance of the Richland Soil and Water Conservation District are available without regard to race, color, religion, sex, gender identity, age, national origin, ancestry, disability, or veteran status.

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*\*\* Serving all Richland County Landowners with Conservation Assistance \*\**

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