

Community Conservation in Bucks County NEWSLETTER



MINDING MEADOWS

If you work in municipal land management, lead a conservation nonprofit, or simply care about the green spaces around you, chances are you've been hearing it a lot lately: **convert your turf to meadow**. From environmental agencies to backyard gardeners, the message is everywhere – and we at BCCD are happy to admit we're one of the voices repeating the mantra:

“Less lawn. More natives.”

Why the buzz? The benefits are real.

- Less mowing = reduced cost
- Deeper roots + taller plants = more stormwater infiltration
- More plant species = more biodiversity
- Aesthetic greenspace habitat = passive recreation, improved public health

Let's be real, there are challenges too:

- Negative public perceptions - “they’re messy”
- Invasive species are hard!
- Intimidation factor, we’ve never done this before

We hear you and we want to help. A series of partner-led workshops offered this summer will share the knowledge and resources to lead your own meadow project.

Click

- | | |
|--|---|
|  July 9 @ 9:30 am - 11:30 pm | <i>Weed Management without Herbicides - Archewild Deal Park 2955 Edge Hill Rd Huntingdon Valley</i> |
|  July 10 @ 10:00 am - 12:00 pm | <i>Municipal Meadow Installation with Heritage Conservancy Russell-Mandel Preserve 1515 Holicon Rd New Hope</i> |
|  Aug. 25 @ 9:00 am - 3:00 pm | <i>Grassland & Meadow Maintenance w/Pennypack Ecological Restoration Trust & Archewild 2955 Edge Hill Rd. Huntingdon Valley</i> |
|  Aug. 29 @ 10:00 am - 12:00 pm | <i>Meadow Inspiration Tour with Heritage Conservancy \$15 Lindsay Preserve 545 Almshouse Road Warwick</i> |

When Ponds Bloom: The Backyard Window into a Bigger Problem

If you've noticed your backyard pond turning soupy green this summer — a thick mat of filamentous algae clinging to rocks, or a pea-green haze clouding the water — you're watching eutrophication in miniature. The process is simple: too many nutrients, not enough balance. Eutrophication begins when excess phosphorus and nitrogen flood a water body from decomposing organic matter, fish waste, lawn fertilizers, or accumulated sediment. In a backyard pond, a single disturbance can tip the system. Aquatic plants and algae respond first, outcompeting everything else. As algae die and decompose, oxygen plummets. Zooplankton like *Daphnia* — nature's tiny grazers that keep algae in check — disappear, and without that biological control, blooms take over completely.

The same story plays out at larger scale in Bucks County's own lakes. Nockamixon, Galena, Luxembourg, and Towhee all experience algae blooms driven by phosphorus and nitrogen washing in from surrounding developed and agricultural land. In these systems, the stakes rise sharply.



Backyard fishpond with abundant filamentous algae

Some cyanobacteria — blue-green algae — can form harmful algal blooms (HABs) that devastate aquatic ecosystems: oxygen depletion suffocates fish, toxins attack the liver and nervous systems of aquatic organisms, and the collapse of zooplankton and invertebrate communities unravels the food web from the bottom up.



Lake Luxembourg June 4, 2026

For dogs, HABs pose an acute and well-documented danger. A dog wading or drinking at the shoreline of a bloom can ingest enough cyanotoxin to cause liver failure, seizures, and death within hours. Dogs are drawn to the scent of blooms and may lap up surface scums containing the highest toxin concentrations. There is no antidote. A HAB advisory is not a precaution — it is a hard prohibition on dog access to the water.

The connection between a backyard pond and a reservoir miles away isn't metaphorical — it's hydrological. Every lawn, field, parking lot, and rooftop in a watershed contributes nutrients carried by stormwater into local streams and larger water bodies. Reducing that load requires action at every scale: native plantings and responsible fish stocking around backyard ponds; riparian buffers, stream restoration, and stormwater retrofits at the watershed level. Healthy water begins on the land around it.