



Backyard Conversation Connecting Community + Conservation

Welcome to the Backyard Conversation! Each month we'll be sharing a conservation topic from a more personal viewpoint for our readers. To make this successful, I want to hear feedback from you! I'll include a poll at the bottom regarding our topic and share links to some of our partner organizations with similar messages. So, let's get to it!

Respect Our Wetlands Vernal Pools-R-Cool!



Spring is just around the corner! Temperatures increase, snow melts, and rain falls - emerging beautiful plants and critters. Where can you find these plants and critters? Wetlands! [Wetlands](#) come in many shapes and sizes from vernal pools to small streams to large marshes. Think of wetlands like a kidney - they act as an environmental filter and trap pollutants, break down organic material, and turn dissolved nitrogen into nitrogen gas. This helps reduce stormwater pollution and improve water quality. Let's talk about one unique wetland that emerges this time of year: vernal pools.

Vernal Pools-R-Cool!

[Vernal pools](#) are low areas saturated with shallow water typically during late winter and

spring, collecting water from winter snowmelt and spring rain. The size can vary and is dependent on weather patterns each year. They may dry up and disappear and then reappear multiple times in one season! They are *full* of life - you will find many plants, amphibians, and birds in or around a vernal pool. Many vernal pools have been lost to development and human interference, so it's imperative we do our part to understand and protect vernal pools.

You can find numerous [amphibians](#) that use vernal pools as their breeding grounds including toads, frogs and salamanders. Amphibians often return to their exact birthplace to find a mate and reproduce. While out and about, you might even hear it! Amphibians often make noises to attract a mate, so listen closely if you're out for a walk. In addition to amphibians, you can also find interesting [plants](#) in or near a vernal pool: [Swamp White Oak](#), [Skunk Cabbage](#), [Buttonbush](#), [Cinnamon Fern](#), and [Marsh Marigold](#) to name a few. [Macroinvertebrate](#) aficionado? You can find those too!

Where can I find a vernal pool?

There are quite a few vernal pools around town in our local parks and preserves. You can even turn it into a family learning adventure by taking our "[Venturing Into Vernal Pools](#)" [SWIFTlet activity](#) with you. Check out these locations in our local Metro Parks, parks and preservation areas to find nearby vernal pools:

- [Blacklick Woods](#)
- [Boyer Nature Preserve](#)
- [Calamus Swamp](#)
- [Gahanna Woods State Nature Preserve](#)
- [Gallant Woods Park](#)
- [Glacier Ridge](#)
- [Heritage Park](#)
- [Highbanks](#)
- [Hoover Meadows](#)
- [Inniswood](#)
- [New Albany Nature Loop](#)
- [Scioto Grove](#)
- [Sharon Woods](#)
- [Walnut Woods](#)

Want to learn more about wetlands and vernal pools? See the beauty for yourself by watching [this video](#) below from Eastern Nazarene College. Check out the [Ohio Vernal Pool Network](#) for more resources on vernal pools and the [Ohio Wetlands Association](#) for more resources on wetlands.



Conservation Mini-Grants

We are accepting applications for our 2022 Conservation Mini-Grant program! Grants are available for up to \$2000 to three non-profit organizations for local on-the-ground conservation projects in Franklin County, Ohio. Preferred projects are those directly benefitting underserved communities. Applications are due **February 28**. First-time applicants are encouraged to reach out to us prior to submitting your application. For more information, [click here](#).

Annual Tree Sale

Our [Annual Spring Tree and Plant Sale](#) is live. Each year, we sell a unique selection of small native shrubs, trees and perennial plug kits to raise money for our conservation fund. While the plants are small, they're very affordable. Given a few years of TLC, they can create a wonderful habitat for your yard! We also have seed packets and mushroom kits available this year. We still have plenty in stock, but get them before they're gone! Last day to order is **March 27**.



Shop Here

POLL TIME

Have you seen a vernal pool before?

Yes, on public property

Select

Yes, on private property

Select

Not yet, but I will soon!

Select

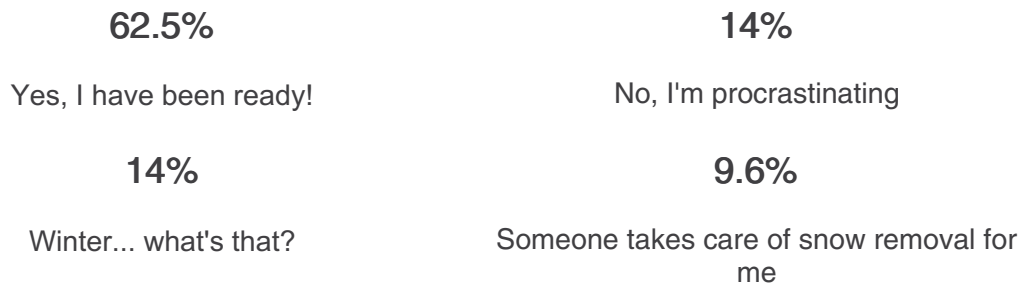
No, I have never seen one

Select

I don't know

Select

Here are the full results from December's poll asking if readers were prepared for winter weather and snow removal:



Get the Scoop from Nature Scoop

Want to learn more about backyard conservation, pollinators, and more? Subscribe to the monthly newsletter called Nature Scoop by Toni, Habitat Ambassador. [Check out the issue for February 2022](#): How to help save the American Bumblebee; Plan for Spring Gardens; How to keep English House Sparrows out of Bluebird Houses; Wildlife Native Garden Tips & More! Learn more at www.backyardhabitat.info and on Twitter [@NatureScoopOhio](https://twitter.com/NatureScoopOhio).

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