



# Grass Roots for Conservation



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## Elkhart County Soil & Water Conservation District

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### *The Gift of the Silver Stream*



Once upon a time, in the heart of Elkhart County, a magical community flourished where people lived harmoniously alongside nature's abundant gifts. This enchanting place was known as Silver Stream Valley, celebrated for its vibrant landscapes, shimmering waterways, and the lush greenery that blanketed the hills. Each year, the townsfolk gathered to celebrate the spirit of Christmas and reflect on the importance of caring for their surroundings.

As the snow gently fell, draping the valley in a soft white blanket, preparations for the annual Christmas Festival began. Among the townspeople, the Elkhart County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) team worked tirelessly. Their motto was simple yet profound: "Building a stronger, more resilient Water Quality of Life."

On Christmas Eve, an SWCD supervisor, an old and wise man named Mr. Rivers, gathered the community by the banks of the Silver Stream. With twinkling lights dancing in the background and the scent of pine wafting through the air, he began to speak.

"Dear friends," Mr. Rivers said, his warm voice cutting through the crisp winter chill, "our beautiful Silver Stream is more than just water flowing by; it is life itself. Its purity brings nourishment to our crops, sustains our wildlife, and fills our hearts with joy. But we must remember that every drop of water is precious—a gift we must steward with great care."

As he spoke, a flicker of light caught Mrs. Evergreen's eye. She was the oldest resident in the valley, known for her kindness and deep connection to the land. With a voice full of wisdom, she added, "Let us remember that stewardship is not only about what we do for our land but also about how we come together as a community."

With her words echoing in the hearts of those gathered, the townsfolk decided to show their gratitude not just with festive celebrations but through acts of kindness and care for the Silver Stream. They planted trees along its banks, collected debris, and organized teams to monitor water quality, ensuring that the stream remained vibrant for generations to come.

As the clock struck midnight, casting a spell of wonder over the valley, a mystical event unfolded. The very waters of the Sil-

ver Stream glimmered and sparkled, as if infused with the spirit of Christmas. To everyone's surprise, a gentle voice flowed from the stream, reverberating as a soft melody.

"Thank you, dear friends, for your love and stewardship. I shall grant you a special Christmas wish for your tireless efforts!" The shimmering currents bubbled joyously, and the townsfolk gasped in delight.

Without hesitation, they wished for a future where their community remained united in its commitment to caring for the land and water. They hoped generations to come would also learn the value of preservation and harmony with nature.

With a playful splash, the waters responded, "Your wish is my command! United you shall stand, and together you will shine bright."

As dawn broke on Christmas Day, the townsfolk found not just the valley transformed with new beauty—lush greenery thrived, wildlife danced, and the Silver Stream sparkled more brilliantly than ever—but also their hearts were filled with an unwavering commitment to being good stewards of their land.

From that day forward, Elkhart County became a beacon of hope, teaching others about sustainability, conservation, and the power of unity in stewardship. Each year, as they celebrated Christmas, they remembered the magical night when the Silver Stream reminded them of the importance of their work.

So, as the snowflakes fell and joy filled the air, they carried on, knowing that together, they could create a "Water Quality of Life" that would inspire countless others in the years ahead.

***Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year from all of us at the Elkhart County SWCD! May your hearts be as full as the Silver Stream, flowing with kindness and the spirit of stewardship.***

# 2025 Tree Sale Species Information List

## Deciduous Trees



### **Black Walnut** (*Juglans nigra*)

While not a tree for a small yard, when space permits this tree is worth planting. A small grove of black walnuts is a pleasing sight, indeed. Again, if you have the space, this tree is worth growing for its nut production and valuable wood. Many consider black walnut to be the premier hardwood in the North American forest and, as a result, it was overharvested. Do your part to maintain this great tree.



### **Northern Red Oak** (*Quercus rubra*)

The northern red oak has been called "one of the handsomest, cleanest, and stateliest trees in North America" by naturalist Joseph S. Illick, and it is widely considered a national treasure. It is especially valued for its adaptability and usefulness, including its hardiness in urban settings. This medium to large tree is also known for its brilliant fall color, great value to wildlife and status as the state tree of New Jersey. Whether you're selecting a tree to plant in your front yard or out on the farm, it's a fast-growing species worth keeping in mind.



### **Pin Oak** (*Quercus palustris*)

The pin oak is the most popular of the oak species used as a landscape and shade tree. There are several reasons for this. First, it rarely exceeds 75 feet making it suitable for most yards. It tolerates handling and transplanting extremely well and is tolerant of most soil types including wet soils. Most oaks don't exhibit striking fall color, but the pin oak is an exception usually producing a pleasing deep red color in the autumn.



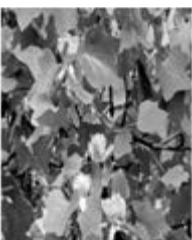
### **Sugar Maple** (*Acer saccharum*)

Maples are North America's favorite shade tree and the darling of the fall foliage displays. The Sugar Maple will not disappoint! Sugar Maples support a wide range of butterfly and moth larvae which, in turn, attract many of our songbirds. And let's not forget to mention that it is the source of delicious maple syrup! Even if you don't intend to "tap" your trees, the sugar maple makes a classic shade tree in a yard.



### **Sycamore** (*Platanus occidentalis*)

One of the tallest of the broad-leaved trees in our native Hoosier forests, the sycamore is easy to spot in the winter by its white trunk. Usually found growing along streams and in lowlands in the wild, the Sycamore has proven itself to be a widely adaptable tree in the home landscape. Even if this tree wasn't a beautiful shade producer, its beautiful bark would be reason enough to place this one in your landscaping.



### **Tulip Poplar** (*Liriodendron tulipifera*)

Every 4th grader in Indiana learns that the tulip tree is our state tree. What generally isn't known is that the tulip poplar is not a true poplar but is, in fact, a member of the magnolia family. It also is one of the tallest and most beautiful trees in the eastern hardwood forest. This is a large tree, capable of reaching heights well in excess of 100'. It usually has a straight trunk and a rounded to spreading crown. The tulip tree blooms in May, producing many tulip-shaped flowers which can be difficult to see since it blooms after the tree leaf's out.

# 2025 Tree Sale Species Information List

## Evergreen Trees



### American Arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis*)

Though a native of Indiana, the arborvitae is now found in the wild in only a few counties in the northwestern part of the state. However, it is “domesticated” everywhere! Their medium size they can reach 40-60 ft, but usually stop around 30 ft, and conical shape make them a versatile addition to the landscape. Being evergreen, they make beautiful windbreaks or privacy screens.



### Eastern White Pine (*Pinus strobus*)

This native Hoosier can claim Elkhart County in its original growing range. Now it is widely planted in yards by homeowners and along fields by farmers. It is fast growing and reaches 100 ft. Like all the pines, its needles are long. The white pine is tolerant of many diverse growing conditions, thriving in moist to dry soils and partial shade to full sun. This tolerant tree makes a great privacy screen, especially when combined with the American Arborvitae



### Fraser Fir (*Abies fraseri*)

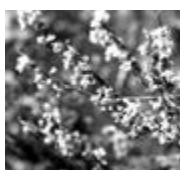
When describing firs the following words come to mind – graceful, noble, formal, and elegant. The Fraser fir is no exception. While not a Hoosier native, it is native to North America common in the cooler, high altitudes of the Appalachians. It is widely grown as a Christmas tree. Go ahead and plant several then harvest your own Christmas tree!

## Small Trees And Shrubs



### Common Lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*)

Many people have asked us to offer the common lilac since we haven't had it in the sale since 2010. As a rule, we try to stay with species of trees and shrubs that are native to Indiana/ North American. But, while not a North American native, the lilac was brought here in the 1500's and so can claim some seniority in our landscape. Everyone is familiar with the spectacular spring display this shrub puts on. The showy lilac flowers are reason enough to plant this. For optimal spring of display, remove the spent flowers after blooming, plant in full sun and occasionally remove older thicker wood.



### Eastern Redbud (*Cercis canadensis*)

The Eastern Redbud is a small to medium tree with heart-shaped leaves. It is named for the many small pea-shaped flowers that cover the tree in the spring. It tends to grow in clusters in the understory and presents one of the most beautiful springtime displays along the roadsides. As a landscape tree, it can be planted in a grouping or as a specimen tree.



### Paw Paw (*Asimina trilobal*)

Let's go down yonder to the Pawpaw patch! Who doesn't know that old ditty? What you probably don't know is that the pawpaw is a member of a tropical family of trees that somehow got “stuck” in a temperate climate. A bit finicky to grow, the “Hoosier Banana” is worth the effort. As an understory plant, it wants dappled shade and plenty of moisture for best growth and fruit production.



### White Flowering Dogwood (*Cornus florida*)

When you say “dogwood” to most people, what they picture is the white flowering variety. A small tree, rarely growing beyond 30ft in height, it packs a real visual wallop in the spring landscape, especially if combined with the eastern redbud as their bloom times will often overlap. But don't overlook this tree's autumn impact. The leaves turn scarlet to purple in the fall.

ELKHART COUNTY  
**PAY DIRT 2025**



WHERE CULTIVATION & CONSTRUCTION MEET



**Land Users, Contractors, Engineers,  
Surveyors, Excavators, Erosion  
Control Inspectors and more!**

*This two-day event will focus on agriculture  
and storm water management, featuring  
hands-on demonstrations, networking  
opportunities, and discussions on best  
practices for water quality of life.*

**Tuesday & Wednesday,  
March 4 & 5, 2025**

**Elkhart County 4-H Fairgrounds • 17746 CR 34, Goshen, IN 46528**



To learn more or register  
scan the QR code or visit:  
[www.elkcoswcd.org/pay-dirt/](http://www.elkcoswcd.org/pay-dirt/)



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### December

16<sup>th</sup> **SWCD Board Meeting:** 5:30 PM,  
SWCD Office, 59358 County Road 7, Elkhart, IN

24<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> **Christmas Holiday:** The SWCD Office will be  
closed for the *Christmas Holiday*

**2025**

### January

1<sup>st</sup> **New Year's Holiday:** The SWCD Office will  
be closed for the *Holiday* observed

13<sup>th</sup> **SWCD Board Meeting:** 5:30 PM,  
SWCD Office, 59358 County Road 7, Elkhart, IN

20<sup>th</sup> **Martin Luther King Jr Day:** The SWCD Office  
will be closed for the *Holiday* observed

### February

4<sup>th</sup> **83rd Annual Meeting:** Southgate Crossing,  
27751 County Road 26, Elkhart, IN. 6:30 pm.  
Please call the office to register or go to our  
website, [www.elkcoswcd.org](http://www.elkcoswcd.org).

17<sup>th</sup> **SWCD Board Meeting:** 5:30 PM,  
SWCD Office, 59358 County Road 7, Elkhart, IN

## SWCD - NRCS CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP DIRECTORY

59358 County Road 7, Elkhart, IN 46517  
Ph. (574) 523-2030 • [www.elkcoswcd.org](http://www.elkcoswcd.org)

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### Board of Supervisors:

Alex Wait, Chairman      Darrell Shover, Vice Chairman  
Dale Leer      Keith E. Miller      Dean Rink

### Associate Supervisors:

David Bontrager      Gary Kauffman  
Tom Kercher      Tom Perry

### SWCD Staff:

Jim Hess, District Manager      Todd Clark, Conservationist  
Lora L. Atkins, Secretary/Treasurer      Jenna Wait, Conservationist

### NRCS Staff:

Deb Knepp - Acting District Conservationist

### ISDA Staff:

Sandra Hoffarth      Heath Hurst  
District Support Specialist      Resource Specialist Manager

All programs and services of the Conservation Partnership and the Soil and Water Conservation District are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, religion, sex, age, marital status or handicap.