YARD by YARD

COMMUNITY RESILIENCE PROJECT

Kevin Mink, Urban Soil Health Specialist
ACHIEVING OUR MISSION

Our mission is to educate, empower, and assist the citizens of Oklahoma County in protecting, managing, and conserving our renewable resources.

Our vision is to have clean water and healthy soils for a sustainable quality environment.
HOW IT STARTED
TACKLING CONSERVATION YARD BY YARD

- Promote native plant diversity
- Improve local water quality
- Promote local food production
- Decrease usage of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers.
- Decrease excess water usage from irrigation
- Create pollinator and wildlife habitat
- Promote land stewardship
EXPERTS & RESOURCES

- City of Oklahoma City
  - Water Conservation Coordinator
  - Sustainability Manager
- Oklahoma Forestry Services
  - Urban Forestry Coordinator
- OSU Extension
  - Urban Agriculture & Natural Resources Educator
- Oklahoma Conservation Commission
  - Soil Health Coordinator
I maintain a pesticide-free yard.

(This means no use of synthetic herbicide, pesticide, or pre-emergent applications)
SOIL

- Use of organic mulch (non-rubber, non-dyed) such as wood chips or leaves to help build soil organic matter and hold moisture
- On-site Composting system capturing organic waste for use in the landscape
- Practice mulch mowing of lawn rather than bagging lawn clippings
- Improve soil and plant health through compost amendments
- Increase mowing height to at least 3”
Xeriscape and/or other heat/drought tolerant plants that require little or no extra water

Use of efficient irrigation equipment and controllers

Utilize rain barrels to capture rainwater for irrigation use

Use of a rain garden or bioswale to capture, slow and infiltrate rainwater
FOOD

- Presence of vegetable garden, whether in ground, containerized, or raised bed
- Presence of herb garden for cooking and/or medicinal purposes
- Use of cover crops or companion plantings
- Presence of fruit-producing trees or shrubs
- Integration of grazing/pasture animals (chickens, goats, etc.)
- Maintenance of honeybee hives for honey production
HABITAT

- Use of native or well-adapted plants to Oklahoma
- Use of host plants for native wildlife (ex. milkweed for monarchs)
- Nonnative or invasive plant species excluded or removed from landscape
- Lawn and turf grass areas have been reduced or eliminated
- Plant diversity providing nectar and pollen for wildlife throughout the growing season
- Presence of native trees/shrubs creating vertical structure
- Presence of bee hotels, birdhouses, and/or bat boxes
- Presence of rock or brush pile
FOLLOW-UP & CERTIFICATION

- Yard by Yard Project Signage
- Native Wildflower & Pollinator Seed Mix (covers 250 sq. ft.)
- Yard by Yard Promotional Stickers
- Community Outreach Postcards
- State & Local Representation Outreach Cards
LOCAL REPRESENTATION OUTREACH

- City Councilperson
- State Senator
- State House Representative

Dear: __________

I am happy to be working with the ___ Conservation District to have a yard that is good for my community. My yard helps protect the ________ watershed.

Do you know about the new Yard by Yard Program? Please support me and my neighbors as we add strength, health, and resilience to our landscapes, and thus to our communities! Will you also support the use of conservation practices in our public areas, such as parks and right of ways?

I vote for local leaders who know and understand what the environmental issues are, both locally and globally. Please earn my vote by standing up for sustainability and conservation districts.
Help me help our community...

YARD by YARD

COMMUNITY RESILIENCY PROJECT
okconservation.org/yardbyyard

Let's work together, yard by yard, to protect our soil, water, and native pollinators for a more resilient community

Do you know about the new Yard by Yard Program? I am being a better neighbor by adding strength, health, and resilience to my landscapes, and thus improving our community!

I am happy to be working with the ______________________________________ Conservation District to have a yard that is good for our community. My yard helps protect our community's watershed, a water source for all of us. To find out how you can help our community and the Yard by Yard program, visit: https://www.okconservation.org/yardbyyard

COMMUNITY OUTREACH CARDS
Outdoor Monarch Rearing w/ Dr. Patrick Bell of Oklahoma Native Plant Society
Wildflower Wednesday Posts
FUTURE QUESTIONS

- Code Enforcement Citations → Catalyst for local change?
- Additional Practices & Categories → What’s missing that is important?
- The Problem of Pesticides → How and where do we draw the line?
- Can program be adapted to national level?
FUTURE DIRECTIONS

- Statewide Launch Coming Spring 2021
  - Online and in-person Yard by Yard trainings for interested conservation districts
- Opportunities for Research
  - Impacts on local watershed and water quality
- Community Level Intervention
  - Association of Central Oklahoma Governments looking to promote program in particular neighborhoods
THANK YOU!