A New Program Takes Root

ElkhartWood is a story about people coming together to turn a community challenge into an opportunity. Like turning lemons into lemonade, when city trees are taken down due to natural causes or invasive pests like the Emerald Ash Borer sawyers and woodworkers take those logs and make them into something even better – a greener city. Urban wood utilization is the backbone of the ElkhartWood program and it provides the support needed for community tree planting and education.

Designed with a network of sawyers & woodworkers, ElkhartWood is about more than logs. It’s about trees, health, the community, and above all, citizens sharing unique skills and taking action to make this community a better, greener and more sustainable one. The program includes urban wood utilization, community tree planting, workshops and Reflection Grove. Reflection Grove is an artfully designed visual of EAB’s impact that incorporates a deck built with wood from an Island Park ash tree that came down as a result of EAB.

The goal of the program is to think about the city forest as more than the trees currently growing along streets and in parks, but to think creatively about how we as citizens can contribute to our tree canopy and make the best use of these trees after they come down. The ElkhartWood program connects people to urban trees by finding the value of community-grown trees and putting it towards planting the next generation tree canopy in the city. ElkhartWood is full-circle urban forestry, finding value and increasing capacity for trees that are here, trees that are gone and the trees that are yet to grow.

Get involved with ElkhartWood this fall at the community tree planting at Osolo School Oct. 28 and 29!
The EEC is seeking the following specialized skills. Please contact Ericka at (574) 293-5070 to find out how you can help!

- Communications/newsletter
- Landscaping/horticulture
- Event planning/management
- Edible/small space gardening

Is your company, organization or club interested in volunteering as a group and giving back to the community? Call Ericka Popovich, Volunteer Coordinator, to set up a project at (574) 293-5070 or send an email to ericka.popovich@coei.org.

Invasive Species Removal (year-round)
Volunteers are needed to eradicate invasive plants competing with native vegetation. Training provided.

Adopt-a-Spot at the EEC (year-round)
We are looking for individuals who love being outdoors to adopt areas of the EEC. Volunteers adopt educational and/or natural areas and remove weeds, invasive species, litter and perform other maintenance tasks as needed.

Gardens & Trails

Adopt-a-Trail (year-round)
Nature lovers are invited to help care for trails at Boot Lake Nature Preserve and the EEC. Volunteers keep trails clear of trash and debris.

Trail Improvement (year-round)
Help maintain the hiking trails at the EEC. Spread wood chips, trim overgrowth and ensure trails are in good condition. Equipment and training provided.

Volunteer Farmer (March – November)
Will work for...fresh veggies? Then help with the food education garden! Volunteers plant seeds, weed, water and harvest. There are spring, summer, and fall harvests. No farm/garden experience necessary and you can take home some of the harvest to enjoy!

Garden Projects (March through November)
Spend time weeding, and enhancing gardens at the environmental center. There are several gardens to choose from and we have everything you need to get started!
Tasty Lessons from the Education Garden
The EEC has a working raised bed garden that serves to teach kids and adults about growing their own food. Here you can explore the different plant parts we eat and how to grow a lot of food in a little space. We grow in spring, summer and fall. If you haven’t seen the garden come on out – there’s still a lot of color and a lot of tasty greens!

What’s Growing?
It may be getting colder, but the food education garden is not done growing yet! Here’s what’s growing right now:
Radish (pink beauty and daikon)
Chard (Rainbow, Fordhook)
Curly Cress
Mustard greens
Lettuce & Kale

The weather is getting colder so it is time to prepare the garden for winter. Give an hour or two to help us clean and prep the garden bed and take home some educational edibles!

A Recipe for Volunteers
This is where we share recipes from the Volunteer Appreciation Dinner. Please send in yours!

Eva’s Tropical Pico de gallo
2 Mangos
Diced Pepper (Mild: 2 Jalapeños, Medium: 1 Serrano, or Spicy: 1 Habanero or Manzano)
1 Cucumber
1/2 Red Onion
3 Roma Tomatoes
1 Avocado
1/2 Cilantro bunch
Pinch of salt
Pinch of black ground pepper
1 tbsp olive oil
Juice of 2 limes

Dice the tomato, onion, avocado, cucumber, pepper, and mangoes in a bowl. Finely chop the cilantro and mix. Add the olive oil, lime juice, salt and pepper. Enjoy!

Serves: 2

News from the EEC
Autumn Color
Fall is here! Come out to the EEC and enjoy the beautiful fall colors while they last. Hike the trails, stop for a picnic, or canoe the river while taking in the blaze of red, gold, purple and orange as the trees get ready for winter. The EEC has 66 acres of beautiful fall foliage right here in the city. Winter will be here soon enough – savor autumn at the EEC!