



For Immediate Release: Monday March 15, 2021, 9 am CST
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MidwestGrowsGreen.org

Midwest Grows Green Week

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Environmental non-profit helps businesses, municipalities and natural resource districts meet the rising demand for sustainable landscaping March 22-26.

The US landscaping sector is set to expand in the [first half of this decade](#). In tandem with this expansion, homeowners and residents will demand for more landscaping services that reduce or eliminate inputs of pesticides, fertilizers and water. A 2018 American Society of Landscape Architects study found that 83.3% of consumers wanted to purchase native plants and another 72.4% wanted to install drip or water-efficient irrigation.

“You can no longer wait to provide a safer and healthier landscape from both the environmental and human health perspectives,” said Chip Osborne, the Founder and President of the organic lawn care consulting firm [Osborne Organics](#).

Osborne headlines a group of more than 20 sustainable landscaping experts that will present during [Midwest Grows Green Week](#)’s three training and informational webinars from March 22nd through 26th. [Midwest Grows Green](#) (MGG), the non-profit initiative that will host these full-day webinars, wants the week’s attendees to leave with strategies that will eliminate synthetic pesticide and fertilizer use this growing season.

“Our webinars cover practices, tools, case studies and resources relevant to any landscaping occupation from the urban forest manager to the home lawn care company,” MGG’s leader, Ryan Anderson, explained.

Osborne starts MGG Week with his March 22nd “[Adding an Organic Lawn Care Service to Your Business](#)” training webinar. Attendees will learn from Osborne and successful companies of [Good Nature Organic Lawn Care](#), [Organic Lawns by LUNSETH](#) and [Greenwise Organic Lawn Care](#) how to develop, market and manage an organic lawn care business.

“People need a way to care for their yard that they feel comfortable with and satisfies their aesthetic and environmental needs,” said Good Nature Organic Lawn Care owner, Alec McClennan.

Osborne, McClennan and many more MGG Week presenters will focus on caring for the beneficial microorganisms that live in the soil.





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“One cup of healthy soil contains more than 200 billion bacteria, 20 million protozoa, 1000 thousand nematodes and 50 thousand arthropods,” stated MGG’s Anderson. “Nurturing this soil ecosystem is the key to growing strong, resilient and healthy plants.”

March 24th’s “[Improving Soil Health on Sports and Recreational Fields](#)” webinar will elaborate on the practices that restore this soil asset on highly trafficked turfgrass fields.

“The vast microbial communities that make up the turfgrass microbiome offer great promise for providing quality turfgrass with fewer inputs,” said University of Wisconsin Associate Professor, [Dr. Paul Koch](#).

Dr. Koch will share preliminary research on how inputs such as pesticides and fertilizers can alter the microbiome on turfgrass fields for golf courses, soccer fields and other turfgrass fields. Multiple managers, including [Dan Dinelli](#), the Golf Course Superintendent for the North Shore Country Club, and the entire [MGG Natural Lawn Care Technical Assistance](#) team, will describe different composts, organic fertilizers and other organic dense materials that they find improve the performance of turfgrass.

MGG Week’s final webinar on March 25th, “[Viable and Safe Alternatives to Glyphosate](#),” investigates reduction and elimination programs of the world’s most used herbicide. The International Association for the Research on Cancer classified glyphosate as a [probable carcinogen in 2015](#). Ever since, natural resource managers, park managers, landscaping companies and others have sought out alternatives in the face of increasing glyphosate bans and restrictions.

“Replacing man-made spaces with native landscapes greatly limits glyphosate use and mitigates so many other far-reaching problems,” [Natural Communities, LLC’s](#) owner, Nick Fuller, explained.

Fuller will present the four spokes of the flywheel invasive weed management approach that will guide the rest of March 25th’s presentations. These spokes include: (1) “Investigation, Planning and Prevention,” (2) “Plant and Seed Selection,” (3) Alternative Invasive Weed Management Products and Structures to Glyphosate” and (4) “Evaluation & Improvement.”

Park managers such as Dan MacSwain, the Natural Resource Coordinator for Washington County, MN, have reduced or eliminated their use of glyphosate over time by implementing all four spokes of the flywheel approach, “We can reduce our reliance on glyphosate by challenging ourselves and organizations to continue asking why it is being used and embracing integrated pest management to inspire change.”

Each of the three MGG Week webinars have a \$25 registration fee. Find more information about the webinars at bit.ly/MGGweek21.

This work is proudly supported by [Stonyfield Organic](#), the [North Central IPM Center](#), [Illinois Coastal Management Program](#), [PJC Organic](#), [Earthworks Turf](#) and the [Illinois Food Scrap Coalition](#).