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Illinois Extension

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



**RED OAK
RAIN GARDEN**



July 2021

Welcome to The Red Oak Rain Garden's monthly newsletter!

The [Red Oak Rain Garden \(RORG\) Team](#) produces this e-newsletter monthly to keep our supporters up to date on everything that's going on at the garden.



Water standing in the garden after heavy late-June rain. Photo by Eliana Brown.

Public Engagement

Blogs

- [In the Garden: June](#)
- [An Interview with Karen Folk, RORG's Lead Master Naturalist](#)

Social Media Highlights

- Celebrated [Pride Month](#), [Nature Photography Day](#), and [Pollinator Week](#).
- The posts about the late-June [heavy rain event](#) reached very large audiences.

RORG Student Team

[Sandra Bjerga](#) continues to help plan and develop social media. She recently interviewed Professor Tony Endress, who led the charge on the original build of the garden in 2006. The interview is currently being converted into a blog.

Presentations & Tours

- Eliana Brown and Layne Knoche [presented to the Wild Ones: Illinois Prairie Chapter](#) on June 14.
- Layne Knoche gave a tour to the Macoupin County Master Gardeners on June 23.

Fundraising

As of early June, all Community Stewardship Challenge Grant goals have been met thanks to your generous support! Now that the bridge has been built, our fundraising focus shifts to the installation of an interpretive sign that explains what a rain garden is, as well as general history of the Red Oak Rain Garden. If you're interested in supporting this phase of the project, click [here](#).

In the Garden

June Activity

- **Plant Life**
Summer blooms have taken the spotlight as species like Southern Blue Flag Iris, Purple Poppy Mallow, Pale Purple Coneflower, 'Rozanne' Geranium, and Butterflyweed hit their peak bloom. Yellow Coneflower, Royal Catchfly, Rosinweed, Cardinal Flower, and Purple Coneflower are not far behind and will bloom over the next several weeks.
- **Monitoring**
Precipitation: Our [CoCoRaHS](#) rain gauge watchers reported 7.04 inches of precipitation in June, the highest monthly total since the garden's renovation. Towards the end of the month, the rain garden experienced its first major rain event post-renovation. It successfully soaked up 5.24 inches of rain in four days with no flooding issues.

- ***Boardwalk Bridge Update***

The boardwalk bridge, built from sustainably sourced lumber harvested from [Allerton Park](#), was built in early June! It will officially open to the public once final inspections are completed in the coming weeks. We can't wait to welcome people across for the first time!

- ***Field Guide Update***

The RORG Team is working with Extension's Justin Klett on developing a handheld field guide to be used by volunteers working in the garden. The guide, which is nearing completion, will include species identification cards for each of RORG's 54 species, as well as cards for a variety of weeds that pop up in the garden.

What to Watch for in July

Look for Cardinal Flower to reach its peak bloom this month. One of the showiest plants in the garden, its bright red blooms in the shaded areas of the garden are a favorite of people passing by. Other species in bloom include Purple Coneflower, 'Rozanne' Geranium, Purple Poppy Mallow, Butterflyweed, Rosinweed, Yellow Coneflower, and Royal Catchfly. Black Eyed Susan and White Turtlehead will also begin blooming later in the month. See our full plant collection [here](#).

Many species of butterflies and other pollinators are coming into the garden to take advantage of the plentiful blooms from our native plants. Monarch caterpillars can be seen munching on Butterflyweed and Swamp Milkweed in the sunny areas of the garden. Hummingbirds have also been seen at our red-blooming plants: Cardinal Flower in the shady, wet areas and Royal Catchfly in the sunny, dry areas.

Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities

The garden is being kept beautiful with the help of volunteers from the [Champaign County Master Gardeners](#) and [East Central Illinois Master Naturalists](#), who have started a regular workday each Friday morning. Volunteers are needed throughout the growing season to help with various garden-care activities. If you are interested in participating, check out our [Volunteers hub](#) on the website, send us an email at redoakraingarden@gmail.com, or contact us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), or [Twitter](#).



Cardinal Flower in bloom. Photo by Layne Knoche.

Support the Red Oak Rain Garden

Red Oak Rain Garden | redoakraingarden@gmail.com

The Red Oak Rain Garden (RORG) is **located** on the University of Illinois Urbana campus between Allen Hall and McKinley Health Center. The RORG Team works for **Illinois-Indiana Sea Grant** and **University of Illinois Extension**.

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