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Illinois Extension

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



**RED OAK
RAIN GARDEN**



June 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. **We're excited to announce that we've reached all of our goals for the community stewardship challenge grant thanks to your generous support!** ❤️



Southern Blue Flag Iris in bloom at the Red Oak Rain Garden. Photo by Layne Knoche.

Public Engagement

Blogs

- [In the Garden: May](#)
- [Improving Campus Sustainability One Green Space at a Time](#)

Social Media Highlights

Celebrated [Star Wars Day](#), [Mother's Day](#), [UIUC Graduation](#), and [Memorial Day](#).

RORG Student Team

Sandra Bjerga continues to help plan and develop social media and outreach. She recently interviewed RORG's Lead Master Naturalist, Karen Folk, which has been converted into a great [blog](#). Sandra has also developed a comprehensive plan for an upcoming series featuring each of RORG's 54 plant species, which will be located on each of RORG's digital platforms.

Presentations & Tours

Layne Knoche [gave a tour](#) to the Champaign County Master Gardener class of 2021 on May 1.

Progress toward Community Stewardship Challenge Grant

In partnership with the [Champaign County Design & Conservation Foundation](#), RORG received a Community Stewardship Challenge Grant from the [Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation](#) (ICECF). This grant helps natural areas establish relationships with new donors and/or to raise new support that can be directed towards stewardship. They match donations 3:1 up to \$7,000 and provide \$6,000 for volunteer hours for a total of \$32,000. **In January, we met our fundraising goal of \$7,000! As of May 31, we have reached our goal of 400 volunteer hours!**

In the Garden

March Activity

- ***Plant Life***

The garden is looking lush as we prepare for the vibrant show of summer blooms just around the corner. As the garden grows and matures following the 2019 renovation, lessons are still being learned by the RORG team. We have a plan for this called Adaptive Management. In other words, when something doesn't perform well, we document it and adapt. This is the case with a certain species of sedge that has a tendency to flop at this time of the year, causing it to be unsightly. Plans are in the works for addressing this issue. Stay tuned for a blog!

- **Monitoring**

Precipitation: 3.67" of precipitation was reported by our [CoCoRaHS](#) rain gauge watchers for the month.

- **Red Oak Health**

Extension Horticulture Educator [Ryan Pankau](#) worked with equipment provided by UIUC Facilities & Services to apply mycorrhizae around the Red Oak which will help to keep the tree healthy. Ryan has written an upcoming guest blog explaining the importance of these practices.

- **Boardwalk Bridge Update**

BREAKING NEWS: THE BRIDGE IS BUILT! The lumber, which was sustainably sourced from [Allerton Park](#), was delivered to campus in late May and was used for construction this past week. The bridge will open to the public post-inspection. Come check it out!

- **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 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 June

This month, look for Southern Blue Flag Iris, 'Rozanne' Geranium, Pale Purple Coneflower, and Smooth Phlox early in the month before other species like Purple Poppy Mallow and Butterflyweed take center stage. Cardinal Flower, Purple Coneflower, and Buttonbush may be seen in bloom by the end of the month. See our full plant collection [here](#).

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. More 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](#).



Boardwalk Bridge Under Construction. Photo by Eliana Brown.

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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