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**Illinois Extension**

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

## RED OAK RAIN GARDEN

**September 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.



RORG Landscape Designer Layne Knoche leads a tour of the rain garden.

### **In the Garden**

#### **Upcoming Projects**

The week of September 13, plants are being delivered for what the RORG team is calling an

"expansion" of the garden. The new planting areas, which have been fenced off and treated, are located just to the west of the garden and will be planted with a variety of native and "nativar" species. Several university classes and community organizations are scheduled to help install these plants on September 15, 17, and 19. See below for upcoming volunteer opportunities.

Around the same time, work will be ongoing around the Dorner Drive Retention Pond, just to the south of the rain garden. The RORG team is working with UIUC Grounds to treat this area to eliminate non-native plants and to allow nearly an acre of high-quality Illinois native seed mix to grow over the coming years. For more updates on the Dorner Drive project, check out this [blog](#).

Late in the month, several new native trees and shrubs will be installed to the south and east of the garden, creating a screen between the rain garden and the McKinley Health Center parking lot.

All of these installations were made possible by the [Illinois Clean Energy Community Foundation's Community Stewardship Challenge Grant](#) and by the generous support shown by many of you.

## Upcoming Volunteer Opportunities

The RORG team is seeking volunteers to help spread mulch prior to planting. We are also seeking volunteers throughout the day on Friday, September 17 to help our [Master Gardener](#) and [Master Naturalist](#) volunteers installing plants. If you are interested, please send an email to [redoakraingarden@gmail.com](mailto:redoakraingarden@gmail.com).

## August Activity

- ***Plant Life***

Showy summer blooms included Purple Poppy Mallow, Purple Coneflower, 'Rozanne' Geranium, Rosinweed, and Black Eyed Susan. Though not as many as last year, Monarch caterpillars have been seen consuming Swamp Milkweed and Butterflyweed. [See our full plant library](#).

- ***Monitoring***

*Precipitation:* Our [CoCoRaHS](#) rain gauge watchers reported 4.19 inches of precipitation. The average for August is 3.1 inches.

- ***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.

## Public Engagement

## Blogs

- [In the Garden: August](#)
- [Looking Back on my RORG Experience](#)

## Social Media Highlights

- Celebrated the [First Day of Classes](#) and [National Dog Day](#).
- Other popular posts included a [Hummingbird and Monarchs post](#), a shoutout to Facilities & Services for the [new trash bins](#), and photos from a [student orientation tour](#).

## RORG Student Team

[Sandra Bjerga](#) wrapped up her work with the RORG team early in the month. She wrote a [blog](#) detailing her experiences with us. We'll miss her!

## Presentations & Tours

Guided tours were given to the [UIUC Child Development Lab](#), [Sustainability LLC](#), [Unit One/Allen Hall](#), and a UIUC [Urban Planning](#) class.

## Fundraising

Now that the bridge has been built, our fundraising focus has shifted to the installation of interpretive signage that will explain the purpose of rain gardens, the general history of the Red Oak Rain Garden, and all of the co-benefits that come along with rain gardens. If you're interested in supporting this phase of the project, please go to <https://redoakraingarden.org/support/>.





Purple Coneflower is in bloom along the sunny banks of the rain garden. Photo by Layne Knoche.

Support the Red Oak Rain Garden

**Red Oak Rain Garden | [redoakraingarden@gmail.com](mailto: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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