



The promise of spring is in the air. We can still see snow on the ground, but we seem to be on a warming trend.

The sap is running and, depending on the weather, maple sap collection will start at Slate Run this week. If you are interested in learning more about maple sap collection and syrup production, call the Slate Run Historical Farm (614-833-1880) for details about the programs that will be held the last weekend of February and the first weekend of March.

We are growing! The Stewards Board of Directors has increased by two. Please welcome: Phil Wells, Director of Customer and Media Communications at Columbia Gas, and Jamie Greene, Founding Principal of ACP Visioning+Planning, Ltd.

The Sassafras Leaf has been arriving in your inbox for one year. In the past year we have inaugurated our first fundraiser, the Bison Bowl, for the re-introduction of bison to Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park. The Bison Bowl was a lot of fun, and **we are looking forward to our next Bison Bowl on Saturday, June 11, 2011.** Stay tuned for details about location and registration.

Drum roll, please.... On Saturday, February 4, six female bison made the journey from The Wilds to their new home at Battelle Darby Creek Metro Park. Check out the link below to the *Columbus Alive* blog by John Ross which includes pictures and a short video of moving day. The move went very well.... Imagine how interesting it must have been to load, transport and unload six animals that weigh in the neighborhood of 600 to 1000 pounds!

http://blog.columbusalive.com/venture/2011/02/bison_at_battelle_darby_creek.shtml

For the coming year we will be continuing to focus on outreach activities as we support the bison re-introduction project.

You have **three more chances to partake in the Winter Hike series:**

- Saturday, Feb. 19, Scioto Audubon
- Saturday, Feb. 26, Battelle Darby (you can also look for the bison!)
- Sunday, Feb. 27, Slate Run (and then go check out the maple tree taps)

For you warm(er) weather walkers and runners, **a new series will be starting on April 17: Wellness in the Woods.** You will have the option to run or walk a 5K or a 10K. This program is sponsored by Metro Parks and Craig Thompson of Greenswell, and he is donating \$5.00 of every entry fee to the Stewards of Metro Parks. For more information, you can visit Greenswell on Facebook or the events section of the Columbus Metro Park facebook page. Craig will be launching a Greenswell website at the end of February.

Time and Place of the hike/runs:

- Sunday, April 17, Blendon Woods
- Sunday, May 15, Blacklick Woods
- Sunday, June 12, Glacier Ridge
- Sunday, July 24, Scioto Audubon
- Sunday, August 21, Three Creeks
- Sunday, September 17, Olentangy Trail
- Sunday, October 2, Sharon Woods
- Sunday, October 30, Highbanks
- Sunday, November 13, Battelle Darby

And, finally: Here is an opportunity to work outside and help to improve wildlife habitat in the Metro Parks. **On Saturday, May 7, from 9AM to 12PM, there will be a Volunteer Work Day at Three Creeks Metro Parks to plant native trees and shrubs in an area that was cleared of Amur honeysuckle.** This is a shared effort between Columbus Metro Parks and the Ohio DRN division of Forestry. Please see the attached flyer for more information about what to wear and what to bring. An RSVP is requested.

Garden Tip:

INSIDE The seed catalogs have been rolling in. This year, look at one that you have not ordered from before. You might find a tasty fruit or vegetable that you haven't tried. Be adventuresome... where else can you spend 2-3 dollars for a bit of excitement! There are many books and references on seed starting. Just a few suggestions: *Seeds* by Jekka McVicar; *The New Seed-Starters Handbook* by Nancy Bubel; <http://www.finegardening.com/how-to/articles/ten-seed-starting-tips.aspx>; and <http://www.organicgardening.com/learn-and-grow/starting-seeds-indoors>

OUTSIDE If you planted trees, shrubs or herbaceous perennials later in the fall, take a few moments to go outside and make sure that none of the plants have heaved themselves out of the ground as the ground thaws. Fortunately, with the cold, the winter weeds have not had a chance to germinate, but now that the weather is warming, look for chickweed and the little mustards, cresses and rockets that germinate in cold soils. By the way: chickweed is an excellent spring green. Many of our "weeds" have an herbal use or are edible.

Touch a Park! Stewards of Metro Parks supports and furthers the work of our Metro Parks
1069 West Main Street | Westerville OH 43081 | Tel: 614.891.0700 | Fax: 614.895.6208
www.stewardsofmetroparks.org