



Portage Park District

September 2019 Newsletter

Programming

Full Fall schedule

It's been just a few months since we hired our Education Program Coordinator, Jennifer White and we are happy to share that with this newsletter we are launching a **quarterly program guide**. Guides can be [viewed online](#), picked up in our office, or found in a kiosk information box in our parks.

We welcome you to attend our free programs and learn more about the natural world around us. Please register for programs you plan to attend, so we can notify you of any changes due to weather or other circumstances.

See you on the trails!

Fall intern

Meet our Communications intern, Taylor Ruiz

I'm an Applied Communication major at Kent State and I'll be graduating this Fall. I'm also a Military Police Officer in the Ohio Army National Guard. Once I graduate, I hope to find a job in marketing, communication, music production, or film. I was very excited to get an internship with Portage Park District because I love going to all the local parks and taking in

This Issue

[Programming](#)

[Fall intern](#)

[Jen's Corner](#)

Upcoming programs

Lichen Walk

Sept 4, 6-7:30 p.m.

After School Nature Hunt

Sept 10, 4 p.m.

Brimfest Parade

Sept 14, 9-11 a.m.
Volunteer hikers needed

Geocaching 101

Sept 15, 2 p.m.

Pollinator Workshop

Sept 17, 6 p.m.

Park Rx - Meet the Fats

Sept 18, 5:30 p.m.



the scenery. I'm very interested in finding new ways for people to experience the parks and trails that the Portage Park District offers.

Jen's Corner

Forget pumpkin spice, it's Pawpaw season

Author: Jennifer White

September is the beginning of Pawpaw season! The full moon on September 14 is even called the Full Pawpaw Moon. The largest edible fruit indigenous to the United States also happens to be the official Ohio state native fruit (designated in 2009). The Pawpaw is found throughout Ohio and most of the Eastern United States except for New England and much of Florida. It is a native understory or woodland edge tree, often found in moist places such as the bottoms of ravines, steep hillsides, and creek banks.

Once cherished by Native Americans and early settlers for its sweet fruit, the Pawpaw (*Asimina triloba*) has experienced a resurgence in popularity in recent years. It is a small, shrub-like tree that has a tropical look. In fact, many trees in its family are truly tropical, but the Pawpaw is the only member found as far north as Ohio. Have you heard of a "pawpaw patch"? That is a reference to the tree's tendency to send up sprouts from the root, resulting in many trees that come from the same plant. Fruit crops will be realized only if a genetically different strain of Pawpaw is planted nearby for cross-pollination. Those within a single colony will not produce fruit, as they are all clones and unable to cross-pollinate.



If you've ever smelled the small maroon flowers of the Pawpaw in early spring, you may be surprised that such a putrid odor could produce a delicious fruit! The strong odor is needed to attract the flies and beetles that pollinate the plant and enable it to produce fruit. If the flowers are pollinated, Pawpaw fruits will develop in clusters. The fruit ripens in fall, usually in September. The fruits have a banana-like texture, a sweet custard flavor, and are rich in protein. Many kinds of animals eat the fruit, but the Pawpaw plant itself is the host for the beautiful Zebra Swallowtail caterpillar. The fruit has a very short shelf life, so we are now entering the small window of pawpaw enjoyment!

Want to learn more about this unique native tree? Connect with the [ODNR-Division of Forestry](#) or plan a road trip to the annual [Ohio Pawpaw Festival](#). Our fall education program calendar is released. Join me on a guided hike and we may be lucky enough to discover

iNaturalist Workshop
Sept 18, 6:30-7:30 p.m.

Ravenna Balloon A-Fair

Sept 21, 7:30-10:30 .m.
Volunteer hikers needed

Please register online or call to register. Additional programs and events can be found [here](#).

Around Portage

Celebrate Portage!

September 12

Celebrate Portage is looking for volunteers for their annual volunteer day. Contact [Todd Peetz](#) if you are interested in helping.

Like us on Facebook



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some native Pawpaw deliciousness!

Wild Hikes Challenge 2019 - Year of the Pollinators

This year, we celebrate pollinators for the essential role they play in supporting life, and recognize the need to promote pollinator health across the landscape.



To participate, just walk, hike, skip, jog, run or stroll on 8 of the following trails before December 31st to earn a hiking staff (1st year) and/or a 2019 Wild Hikes medallion. Forms can be downloaded [here](#).

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Visit our website | portageparkdistrict.org

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