



SOIL HEALTH NEWSLETTER

Welcome!

Happy New Year and welcome to the first of our soon-to-be-quarterly Soil Health Newsletter! We look forward to sharing these messages to keep you up to date on what's happening and ways to get involved in our new Soil Health + Conservation Initiatives. We launched these initiatives because we believe urban agricultural land stewardship has the unique power to promote climate, economic, and social resilience within our communities, and responsible stewardship starts with how we treat the soil. We are eager to get underway and hope that you will join us at our upcoming workshops, field days, and other events!



Get Involved!

Upcoming Events

Eastern Nebraska Soil Health Conference

When: Wednesday, February 9 from 9 AM - 3 PM

Where: Eastern NE Research, Extension & Education Center, Ithaca, NE (Register [HERE](#))

*Presented by NE Extension

Intro to NRCS Resources for Urban Farmers

When: Tuesday, February 21 from 6 - 7 PM

Where: City Sprouts + Online (Register [HERE](#))

Soil Management Planning

When: Tuesday, March 21 from 6 - 8 PM

Where: City Sprouts (Register [HERE](#))

Soil Joke of the Quarter

*Why can't the A Horizon and B Horizon have kids?
Because they're not 'parent material.'*

Questions? Interested in getting involved?

Email Megan Belongia
(megan@omahasprouts.org)

Program Spotlight: 2022 Soil Health Expo

The following is an excerpt from City Sprouts' December blog post. To read the article in full, visit <https://www.omahasprouts.org/post/celebrating-world-soil-day-2022>.

In December 2022 we had the pleasure of hosting the first ever Omaha Urban Soil Health Expo. The event welcomed over 25 presenters and 60 guests and served as the official launch of City Sprouts' new Soil Health + Conservation Initiatives. In case you missed it, we've got you covered! Keep reading to find key takeaways from the day's presentations and more opportunities to get involved in soil health!



NRCS State Soil Health Specialist, Aaron Hird, kicked off the day's events with a talk on Soil Health for Small-Scale + Urban Farms. Aaron began his talk by defining soil health as, "the continued capacity of the soil to function as a vital living ecosystem that sustains plants, animals, and humans." And when it comes to health, Nebraska soils are in critical condition.

Poor land management practices have led to widespread water infiltration issues across the state - and rural farmers aren't the only one affected. Damaged soils lack the ability to absorb and store even moderate amounts of rainfall. Much of this water then either pools on the surface or runs off the land, carrying with it valuable topsoil and transporting contaminants into waterways. To illustrate this point, Aaron went on to share three live demonstrations of healthy soils' enhanced ability to absorb water while remaining intact.

Luckily, the NRCS is here to help farmers - rural and urban alike - combat poor soil conditions. The NRCS offers a wide variety of programs, including collaborative conservation planning, cost sharing, equipment grants, and more to assist farmers seeking to improve their soil health. Farmers that take advantage of these programs enjoy many benefits along the way, including increased long-term financial and environmental sustainability across their operation. To learn more about NRCS services visit their website, contact your local Service Center, or attend our upcoming Introduction to NRCS Resources for Urban Farmers workshop on February 21, 2023!

Questions? Interested in getting involved?

Email Megan Belongia (megan@omahasprouts.org)