



**Marianist  
Environmental  
Education  
Center**

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## **Faithful Land Stewardship**

*The Marianist Environmental Education Center (MEEC) is an environmental education community in the Catholic tradition. In Mary's hope-filled spirit, we preserve and act in communion with the land and educate other communities in sustainability through ecology-based simple living, social justice and spirituality.*

MEEC has more than 25 years of experience restoring the land at Mount Saint John in Greene County to enhance ecosystem functioning, create habitat, extend the virtue of hospitality to wildlife, and create spaces for education and spiritual reflection. We cultivate more than 300 local genotypes of native wildflowers, grasses, sedges, shrubs and trees in our on-site native plant nurseries, protecting the genetic diversity and heritage of our region. June 24 is our next public **native plant sale**. To receive a catalog, email [info@meec.center](mailto:info@meec.center).

As part of our commitment to the Laudato Si Action Platform, we offer the following ways faith communities can steward their lands in accordance with Pope Francis' call to integral ecology. For information about any of these opportunities, email [Tara@meec.center](mailto:Tara@meec.center).

- We are piloting our **Laudato Si Land Learning Communities** in 2023. A cohort of teams of 3-5 people from local worship communities will together embark on a year-long process of learning the basics of the land and its care. The program will combine in-person and online gatherings, hands-on experience, and a site visit to each community's grounds. We are hosting an information session/organizing meeting on Sunday, March 26 at 3 p.m. in Sieben Hall's Si Lounge. RSVPs requested. Visit our website and select "visit" for a map and directions.
- The purpose of our **Urban Pollinator Fund** is to increase native plant and pollinator diversity in urban and underserved areas in Greater Dayton; to educate new populations about the importance of biological diversity in ecosystem health; and to promote the use of native plants in landscaping applications. The fund relies on dedicated donations to underwrite the cost of providing plants from the Mount Saint John native plant nurseries, providing staff-led on-site consultations and meeting training needs of project managers. We welcome donations and applications.
- MEEC staff members provide on-site **land auditing services** to worship communities in southwest Ohio with a commitment to developing ecologically appropriate land stewardship plans. Our audits provide expertise and advise to support congregation-led efforts. This is a fee-based service.

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*Restoring Communities of Land and People*

- We're happy to schedule tours for communities of the Marianist Nature Preserve (approximately 62 acres of oak-hickory woodland, wetland and Eastern tallgrass prairie permanently protected by a conservation easement held by the Tecumseh Land Trust) and/or the more formal and semi-formal keyhole prairies and native plant gardens around the central campus. This will allow members of your community to see a variety native plant communities "in action." Donations are accepted.
- We're partnering with the Saint Kateri Center for Conservation on a long-term project to map all the faith-held lands in Ohio and assess them for restoration potential. Anyone with Geographic Information Systems experience is welcome to volunteer. Also, the Kateri Center offers a **habitat certification program** that encourages individuals, families, parishes, schools, religious orders, and working landowners to restore and manage their land in ways that praise God and foster a greater connection between God, people, and nature. For more information visit [Kateri.org](http://Kateri.org). MEEC is a certified Kateri habitat.

If your community isn't yet ready to participate at a congregational level, MEEC offers opportunities for individuals to gain land restoration and habitat creation skills, and to foster a deeper understanding and appreciation of God's creation.

- We maintain a regular calendar of retreats and workshops exploring ecological spirituality and native plant topics. On the second, third and fourth Saturdays in April we're hosting a **free online native plant gardening series**, and our next mini-retreat – Spring Inspiration – is tentatively scheduled for April 14. To see all upcoming opportunities, visit our website and select "calendar."
- The restoration of Mount Saint John depends on a committed team of land volunteers, and volunteering is a wonderful way to connect with like-minded individuals while gaining practical working knowledge. We host monthly **volunteer opportunities** on the first Saturday (in the afternoons during the cool season and in the mornings during the warm season, and subject to change on holiday weekends). To join, RSVP [info@meec.center](mailto:info@meec.center) by the Thursday prior and dress for the weather. Groups can be accommodated by arrangement. We're hoping to increase our volunteer pool in 2023 to allow specialized attention to the various native plant gardens around the central campus at Mount Saint John, so this is an excellent time to join! We'll provide all the information and training you need.

Finally, we rely on our Friends of MEEC donor community to fulfill our mission and we invite you to join us. As a Friend of MEEC, you support the stewardship of the Marianist Nature Preserve at Mount St. John, citizen science initiatives such as pollinator surveys, and outreach to Dayton's underserved communities. You also receive benefits at more than 130 nature centers in North America through the Association of Nature Center Administrators, special program rates and access to member-only events. Visit our website and select "donate." We are grateful for your support!