



# Shore Conserver

Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District

*promoting locally led conservation*

22545 Center Parkway   Accomac, VA 23301   (757)302-4431   [www.esswcd.org](http://www.esswcd.org)

**May 2024**

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Ben Young  
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## District Welcomes New Board Member

In April of 2024 ESSWCD gained a new board member. Hélène Doughty was appointed to the board as the VCE appointee by the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors.

Hélène has an undergraduate degree in Secondary Education from Salisbury University and Masters of Science from Virginia Tech in Agriculture and Life Sciences. She has held the position of Research Specialist Sr. in entomology with ESAREC for close to 18 years, working on research and extension programs in vegetable, agronomic, nursery, and horticultural crops.



Hélène is actively involved in her Northampton County community, currently serving or having served on the Eastern Shore Ag Fair committee, the Northampton County Education Foundation board, the Northampton County Public Schools board as district 2 representative, and the Northampton County Historical Society.

She is looking forward to identifying community needs and providing support, resources and building extension programs to benefit Northampton County agricultural and natural resources partners, stakeholders and the community at large. Hélène loves to help and volunteer in her community. She enjoys gardening, photography and graphic design, and spending time with family and friends. We look forward to the unique insights that Hélène will bring to the ESSWCD leadership team.



## 2025 Cost Share Dates

**Sign-up begins July 15th**

**Sign-up deadline is August 23rd**



[www.facebook.com/ESSWCD](https://www.facebook.com/ESSWCD)

# Virginia Ag Cost Share Program

## 2025 Cost Share Kick-Off Breakfast

Thursday, June 27 @ 8:00 a.m.

**SAGE DINER**

25558 LANKFORD HWY  
ONLEY, VA 23418

*Free Buffet  
Breakfast*

**but space is  
limited, please  
register by June 17  
by clicking below:**

<https://tinyurl.com/costsharekickoff>



*Open to the Public*

### Agenda...

- Welcome & Introductions
- NEW ES Soil & Water Cost Share Program Updates/ Changes
- VSU Small Farm Program
- NRCS Program Updates
- FSA Program/ Loan Updates
- VCE Updates for Accomack Co & Northampton Co
- VDACS Updates
- Discussion with local producers



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**NRCS**  
Natural Resources Conservation Service

**FSA**  
FARM SERVICE AGENCY

**USDA**

**VSU** College of  
Agriculture  
VIRGINIA STATE

**Virginia  
Cooperative  
Extension**  
Virginia Tech • Virginia State University

**Virginia Department  
of Agriculture and  
Consumer Services**

# Eastern Shore Invasive Plant Highlight

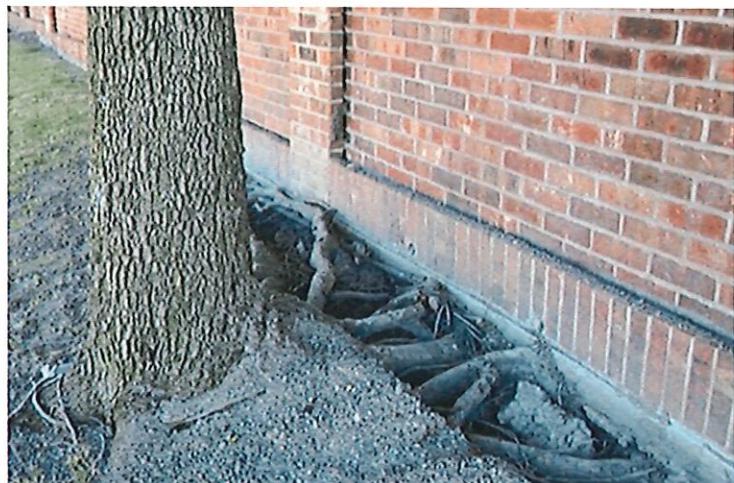
## Not so Heavenly Tree of Heaven

Tree of Heaven (*Alianthus altissima*) is a native of China. It was first introduced in Pennsylvania round 1784 as an ornamental specimen. It is a non-native, invasive plant that is common in disturbed areas such as along roadsides and forest edges. Seeds and seedlings are very tolerant of poor soils and do well in full sunlight. It does not tolerate heavy shade. Seedlings quickly put down a large taproot (within 3 months of germination) and resprouting occurs when the main stem is cut, burned, or otherwise damaged.

Tree of heaven quickly dominates an area due to vigorous resprouting, root-suckering, and secretion of a chemical from its root system to the surrounding soil that is toxic to some other plants. One tree can produce up to 350,000 seeds in a year although they are viable for less than a year. Seeds can be borne on the wind for great distances from the parent plant. These factors combine to make tree of heaven a very aggressive plant that is able to disrupt native ecosystems.

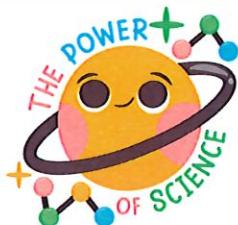
In addition to ecosystem damage, the root system of the tree of heaven is aggressive and capable of damaging sewers, sidewalks, and foundations. These can be expensive problems to fix and are best prevented.

If you have tree of heaven, it is far easier to control or eliminate if it is caught early. Once it is widely established it will be much more difficult to eradicate. The Virginia Department of Forestry has an excellent publication that highlights multiple control methods which can be found at [https://dof.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/Control-and-Utilization-of-Tree-of-Heaven\\_pub.pdf](https://dof.virginia.gov/wp-content/uploads/Control-and-Utilization-of-Tree-of-Heaven_pub.pdf). You can also contact your local extension agent for help in coming up with a mitigation plan.



Tree of Heaven leaves are bi-pinnately compound with a smooth edge and numerous leaflets. (Photo by Karan A. Rawlins, University of Georgia, Bugwood.org)

# 2024 Regional Science Fair



On April 20, 2024, the Eastern Shore Regional Science fair took place at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) in Wachapreague. Erin Morgan, the 4-H Agent with Northampton Cooperative Extension, and Julie Head, Education Director, spearheaded the event, which had not been held since 2019. The two felt strongly that shore students work hard on their science fair projects and the event needed to be brought back to showcase their efforts.

To be eligible to participate in the Regional Science Fair, the students had to follow the scientific method of coming up with a question, researching their topic, developing a hypothesis to predict an outcome to the question, conducting an experiment to test the hypothesis, making observations and collecting data, analyzing the results, and developing a conclusion. The students then had to participate in their school's science fair and be one of the top five exhibits at their school's science fair.

The students who participated in the regional science fair had a wide range of topics including what is the best fishing knot, which sunscreen is most effective, effects of soda and juice on teeth, preventing apple oxidation, and investigating how human urine-based fertilizer affects the growth of peas to name a few. 40 students representing Accawmacke Elementary, Arcadia High, Arcadia Middle, Broadwater Academy, Chincoteague Elementary, Home school groups, Kegotant Elementary, Kiptopeke Elementary, Metompkin Elementary, Nandua Middle, and Pungoteague Elementary Schools participated.

Congratulations to the following winners:

#### High School Division

- 1st place - Daniela Larrienaga and Aitana Pedraza-Mateos, Arcadia High

#### Middle School Division

- 1st place - Nina Adler, Broadwater Academy
- 2nd place - Sidney Pierre, Arcadia Middle
- 3rd place - Aarav Patel, Broadwater Academy

#### Elementary Division

- 1st place - Walter Higgins, Broadwater Academy
- 2nd place - Liam Magee, Broadwater Academy
- 3rd place (tie) - Hayden Morgan, Accawmacke Elementary, and Benjamin Byrd, Broadwater Academy.

We would like to thank the judges including Helene Doughty, Dr. Doug Higgins, Dr. Mark Reiter, Joseph Pentason, and Dr. Richard Snyder, who spent their Saturday morning judging the exhibits. Thank you to C.D. Marsh Jewelers in Onancock for providing the trophies for the winners.

A very special thank you to VIMS for hosting and setting up activities for the students to enjoy while judging was taking place. Finally, thank you to all the teachers, school administrators, and parent who supported this event. We look forward to making next year's Regional Science Fair bigger and better.



Article and pictures by Erin Morgan

# Outreach and Education

## Envirothon 2024



Spring brings Envirothon competitions. The Eastern Shore Envirothon was held on March 19, 2024 at the AREC center in Painter. Teams from Chincoteague, Broadwater, and Northampton competed at the high school level. Broadwater was the overall winner and moved on to the Area VI competition. The Area VI competition was held on April 16. Broadwater won at the area level which made them eligible to move on to the state competition which was held May 19 - 20, 2024, at Radford University.

Congratulations to the Broadwater team coached by Sandra Thornton. Special thank you to AREC for hosting our local competition and VIMS - Wachapreague for hosting the Area VI competition.



Arbor Day 2024

The ESSWCD held an Arbor Day celebration on April 27, 2024, in conjunction with the master gardeners and the Virginia Department of Forestry. Held at Strawberry Square in Cape Charles the event featured tree seedlings and plants native to the Eastern Shore. Tree seedlings included Redbud, Dogwood, Persimmon, Boxelder, and Red Maple. Plant plugs included Butterfly weed (of the milkweed family), ironweed, white turtlehead, coral honeysuckle, and lyre-leaf sage. Look for us next year on April 26th and pick up some native plants!



The Commonwealth of VA supports the Eastern Shore SWCD through financial and administrative assistance provided by the VA Soil and Water Conservation Board and the Department of Conservation and Recreation.

Eastern Shore SWCD programs, activities and employment opportunities are available to all people regardless of disability, race or color, national origin, traits historically associated with race or religion including traits associated with hair, religion or creed, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, pregnancy status, childbirth or related medical conditions, marital status, veteran status, whistleblower status or genetic information.