



NEWS RELEASE

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‘Gardening in the City’ features Murfree Spring wetlands and the challenge of invasive Parrot feather

MURFREESBORO, Tenn. – The Discovery Center and adjacent Murfree Spring wetlands, with a variety of fish, amphibians and birds, is a valuable environmental, cultural and educational asset to the City. The Center and Spring annually attract more than 120,000 children and families. The Spring was the City’s major water source for many years. In 1989, the water plant at the site ceased operation.

In the latest edition of “Gardening in the City,” learn more about the challenges of ensuring that the Murfree Spring wetlands flourish. The Spring 2018 episode of “Gardening in the City” is available for viewing on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/eNGpYrxK64s>.

Kane Adams of the City Urban Environmental Department and Rachel Singer of the Murfreesboro Parks and Recreation Department discuss efforts to reestablish trees in the wetlands and the plan to control invasive Parrot feather. Parrot feather is an invasive plant species that flourishes in shallow water.

Wetlands are important because they serve as nurseries for wildlife, filter out impurities and slow groundwater runoff. While water samples show the system is very healthy, City environmentalists are concerned with the loss of lowland trees in the area and the invasive growth of Parrot feather. Lowland trees such as Ash have suffered from rising water levels.

“With the loss of the canopy the wetlands is in transition right now and it has been in transition for quite some time,” said Kane Adams, Urban Environmental assistant director. “It’s transitioning to low-lying aquatics which requires a whole different approach to urban environmental management.”

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“Something else we’ve been dealing with is the parrot feather due to the loss of trees and the canopy,” added Adams. “Parrot feather is like an algae. With high nutrients and sunlight, you get an algae bloom, a perfect recipe for Parrot feather. It’s a beautiful green covering but the proliferation of Parrot feather impacts the habitat.”

“Gardening in the City” features ways the City is addressing Parrot feather:

- Urban Environmental has invited experts for advice on reducing the evasive plant.
- A control plan includes planting water-loving trees such as Bald Cypress, Sycamore, Water Tupelo and Swamp Chestnut and Swamp White Oak.
- The plan to reforest Murfree Spring will take 30 years but even longer if environmentalists wait until next year.
- The planting of the trees was a joint effort of Urban Environmental, Parks & Rec and the Water Resources Department.

Visitors to Murfree Spring will see many seedlings popping through the Parrot feather with white biodegradable guards around them to prevent beavers from attacking. Visitors will also see three larger Bald Cypress seedlings as an experiment to see if they will establish roots and thrive in the area. If successful, Adams says environmentalists will step up the process.

While beaver dams have contributed to the growth of Parrot feather, one untended positive consequence of the dam is that lower water level on one side created better ground for planting seedlings.

“Beavers get a bad rap but they actually do a lot of good,” said Rachel Singer, Parks & Recreation Department. “They are one of only two mammals who can engineer their environment. As beavers build their environment, it also provides enhanced space for amphibians and water fowl.”

You can watch “Gardening in the City” on CityTV (AT&T Uverse Channel 99/Comcast Xfinity in Murfreesboro on Channel 3 and Roku). Past episodes can be viewed at our You Tube channel at www.youtube.com/cityofmurfreesboro.

In a future episode of “Gardening in the City,” City engineers will discuss the health of the wetlands and daylighting of Town Creek, which currently runs underground until it emerges closer to Cannonsburgh Pioneer Village. “Gardening in the City” is presented by the City of Murfreesboro Urban Environmental Department and produced by CityTV’s John Padgett in the City of Murfreesboro Communications Department.

Located at 502 S.E. Broad Street in Murfreesboro, TN, the Discovery Center is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 1 to 5 p.m. on Sunday. For more information, visit www.exploredc.org or call (615) 890-2300.

For more information on “Gardening in the City” or to suggest a future episode, contact Kane Adams at kadams@murfreesborotn.gov or call John Padgett, Multimedia producer, at 615-848-3245.

For City News online, visit www.Murfreesborotn.gov.

Photo caption:

1. *Rachel Singer and Kane Adams host ‘Gardening in the City’ on CityTV.jpg*
2. *City employees plant seedlings in Murfree Spring.jpg*