



# re:wild your campus

Keep Louisiana Beautiful Conference  
October 23, 2024



# Road Map

10:45-10:50 Introduction

10:50-11:05 Pesticides & Their Impacts in Louisiana

11:05-11:15 Re:wild Your Campus Origin

11:15-11:25 Green Grounds Certification

11:25-11:45 Q&A and Power Mapping

# The Issue: Pesticides

Pesticides are an umbrella term for insecticides, herbicides, fungicides etc.

- Pesticides are any product that claims to kill, reduce, destroy or repel a pest.
- Synthetic and organic
  - *Nearly all synthetic pesticides are fossil fuel derivatives*
- Used in homes, agriculture, & landscaping for killing insects and invasive weeds
- Can do serious harm to human health and environmental biodiversity

# THE RIPPLE EFFECT

**Synthetic pesticide use can cause...**

- **Groundwater contamination**
- **Biodiversity decline**
- **Eutrophication & “dead zones” where marine life cannot survive**







## THE PROBLEM

Universities are at the forefront of innovation and academia, and we are calling on them to maintain safe places to learn & grow our future leaders.

- Majority of schools rely on highly toxic pesticides to maintain landscapes
  - Research shows that 80% of Americans have glyphosate in their bodies.
- Default landscape is lawn which provides minimal ecological benefits.
  - Lawn is the #1 most irrigated crop in America

**SO, WHAT'S THE SOLUTION?**



# About Re:wild Your Campus

- Student founded, women-led non-profit
- We want to see every school go synthetic pesticide and fertilizer-free by 2030
- On a mission to turn college campuses into climate resilient, biodiverse spaces





# THE RIPPLE EFFECT

Colleges and universities are **huge** economic drivers, spending **\$671 billion a year.**

They influence the environmental, economic and policy decisions of cities, counties, and states.

In creating change on college campuses, we can have **a large scale impact** and change how people think about and manage their green spaces.



# **THE SOLUTION: Re:wild Your Campus**

## **Protecting Students & Groundskeepers**

**We work to eliminate synthetic pesticides, many of which have been linked to: cancer, reproductive harm, and neurotoxicity.**

## **Building Climate Resilience**

**We promote healthy soil which improves water retention, requires fewer chemical inputs, and sequesters more carbon.**

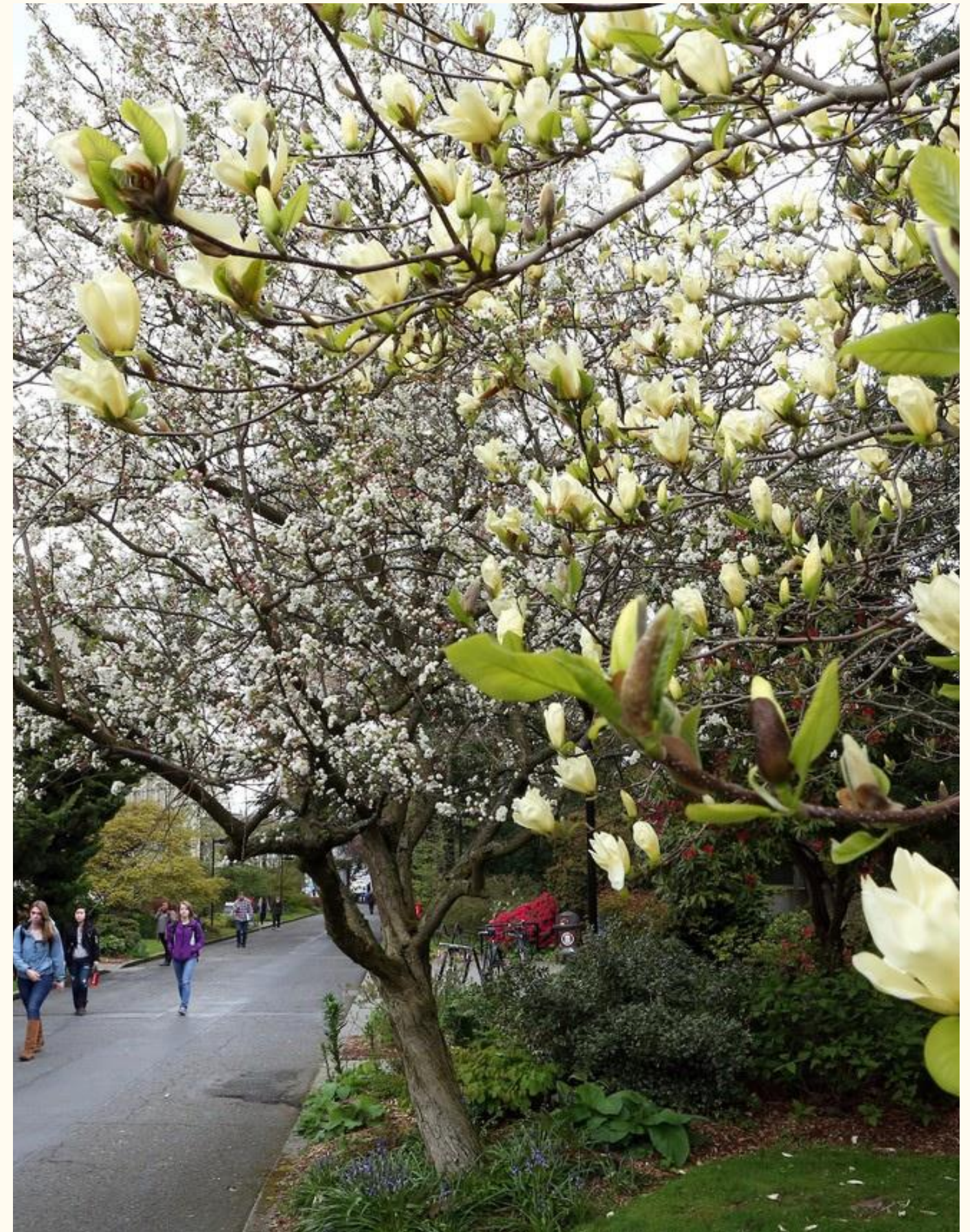
## **Fostering Biodiversity**

**We help schools identify underutilized areas of lawn and help to rewild these spaces with native and edible plants that foster biodiversity.**

# Seattle University

*"My entry into landscape maintenance began as a deep need to do work that was outdoors, among nature. I had always felt a deep kinship with the earth, but as I began my career in the landcare industry and was taught to use pesticides as a way of controlling vegetation, I felt that I was harming the very living beings I regarded so highly."*

*Shannon Britton, Grounds Manager of Seattle U*



# Key Programs

## ✓ Student Network

Supports youth through leadership skill-building, technical support, and one-on-one mentorship to kickstart their campaigns for pesticide free land care and more native plants on their campuses.

## ✓ Green Grounds Certification

Goes above and beyond reducing pesticide use to incentivize regenerative landcare practices that will increase biodiversity, reduce water use, improve soil health, and take campus sustainability efforts to the next level.

## ✓ Ground Up Advocacy Bootcamp

Built for emerging leaders, both students and community members, who seek to enact change on their campuses and communities through environmental and social justice advocacy

## ✓ Organic Pilot Projects

For campuses looking to maximize the sustainability of their campus lawns. In undergoing our 2-3 year Organic Pilot Program, campus staff become well versed in organic practices and are able to manage campus green spaces without toxic pesticides.

# OUR SOLUTIONS: Organic land care

## Reduces water use

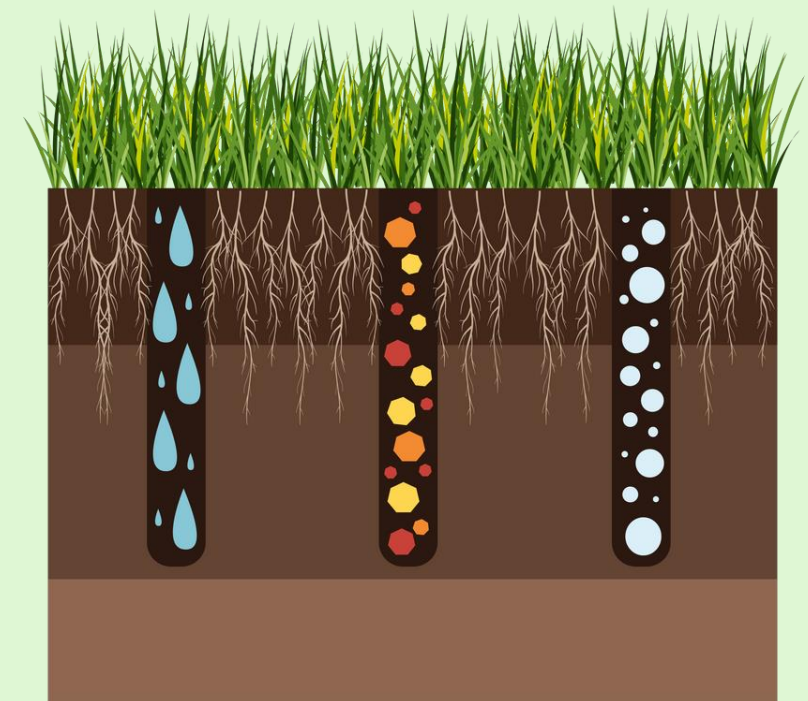
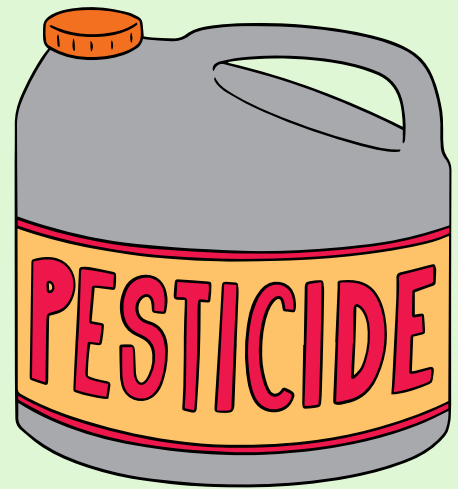
Research shows that schools that transition to organic land care can reduce water use by approximately 25%-30%. Harvard saves 2 million gallons of water annually thanks to organic practices.

## Saves money

At Cascadia College and UW Bothell, considering both the time and the amount of inputs purchased, they are spending 1/10th the amount on their organic lawns as they once did on conventional lawns

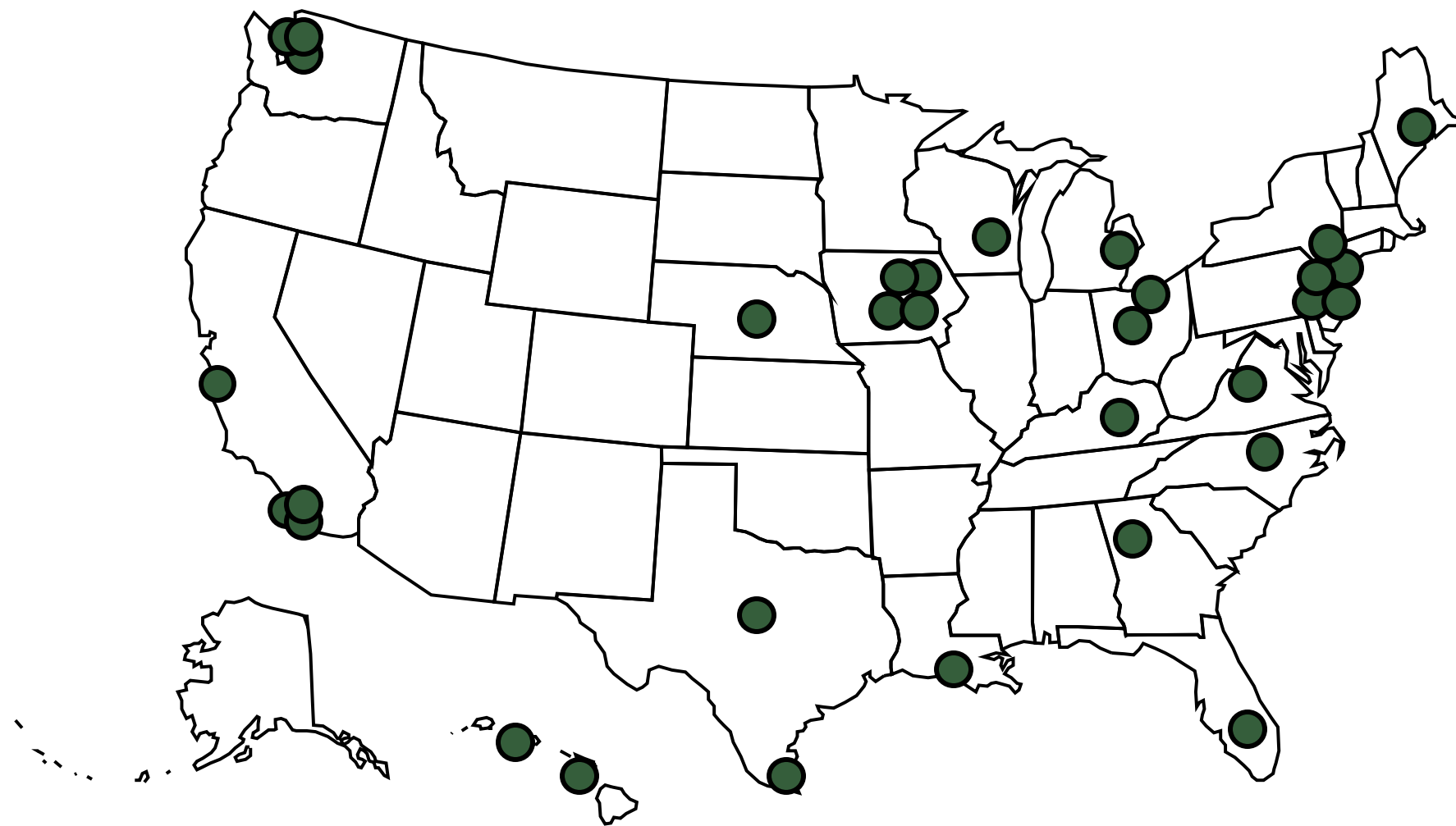
## Improves soil health

Soil test results from UC Berkeley show that there is 22x the amount of flagellate (microorganisms) in soil than two years ago due to the transition to organic land care, indicating an increase in biodiversity and soil health



## OUR IMPACT

# Re:wilding campaigns



**We've worked with over 80 schools, including:**

- California State University Long Beach
- Drexel University
- Emory University
- Grinnell College
- John Jay College of Criminal Justice
- Loyola University New Orleans College of Law
- Loyola Marymount University
- Princeton University
- Rowan University
- University of California, Berkeley
- University of Central Florida
- University of Hawai'i Maui College
- University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill
- University of Michigan – Ann Arbor
- University of Wisconsin – Madison

representing **500,000 + students** across the U.S.

# Organic Pilot Projects

- *Drexel University*
- *Oberlin College and Conservatory*
- *Grinnell College*
- *Emory University*
- *University of Wisconsin Madison*
- *The College of New Jersey*





# Drexel University

WATERSHED

## Drexel University is phasing out herbicides, pesticides on campus grounds

Researchers say weed killers can harm the environment and pose potential human health risks.



By Zoë Read · April 18, 2024

Listen 1:08



# Rewilding



# Grinnell College

## Grinnell students plant prairie without using chemicals to kill grass

'It was so powerful to see students all working together outside'



Erin Jordan

May. 28, 2021 6:45 am, Updated: May. 28, 2021 7:44 am



# What?

The Green Grounds Certification recognizes schools working to make campus grounds more sustainable with an emphasis on the reduction and elimination of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers.



## PROGRAM FEATURE

# Green Grounds Certification



## Certified schools include:

### Platinum:

- Seattle University
- Cascadia College
- University of Washington, Bothell
- UT Austin Dell Medical School

### Gold:

- Colby College
- UCLA
- UMass Amherst

### Bronze:

- University of Northern Iowa
- University of Maryland, Baltimore County





## PROGRAM FEATURE

# Ground Up Advocacy Bootcamp

6

**Bootcamps**

403

**Registrants**

100+

**Different schools  
represented**

### Sessions include:

- History of Pesticides
- Science of Pesticides & Climate Change
- Pesticides & Environmental Justice
- Roundup® Litigation & Lee Johnson
- How to Build a Campus Movement
- Campaign Strategies and Goals



# OUR

## GOALS

- Empower the next generation of climate leaders
- Make pesticide-free land care mainstream
- Improve and increase access to organic land care education and resources
- Spur a cultural shift away from lawn as the default landscape
- Thousands of schools deciding to eliminate pesticides **on their own because of our movement**



## OUR GOALS

# Become the Status Quo

### The Tobacco-Free Movement:

- 1990s: Lawsuits began, including the 1994 FDA historic investigation into industry's manipulation
- Shortly after, the Tobacco-Free campus initiative started, as public health agencies warned institutions of the peril of exposing youth to tobacco
- Today: There are at least 2,599 100% smoke-free campus sites.



23 years after the lawsuits began!

**We can be faster than that!**

**Thank  
you!**



# THANK YOU!



## Get in touch with us!

 Re:wild Your Campus c/o Rewild, PO Box 129, Austin,  
TX 78767 USA

 <https://rewild.org/rewild-your-campus>

 @rewildyourcampus

 campus@rewild.org

 @rewildyourcampus