

# EARTH DAY AT THE BOTANICAL CENTER

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Earth Day is every day for the five area resource specialists that comprise Iowa Department of Natural Resources' Iowa Waste Exchange (IWE) program. While area resource specialists spend the majority of their time working towards a more sustainable world by diverting waste materials from Iowa's landfills, they also serve clients in a host of other meaningful ways.



In April, area resource specialists, located in five regions covering the state from river to river and border to border, were even busier than normal as a result of Earth month activities. Some of these specific activities included but were not limited to: Providing presentations to statewide audiences including a lunch-and-learn in partnership with Iowa State University's Center for Industrial Research and Service (CIRAS) and presenting at the annual conference of the Iowa Chapter of Nutrition and Food Service Professionals.

Additionally, specialists were invited to and participated in multiple Earth Day events where they provided hands-on assistance to attendees in creating a number of upcycled Make-and-Take projects crafted from materials rescued from the landfill. For example, at Earth Day in the Garden held at Greater Des Moines Botanical Gardens, one of the projects included making over-the-shoulder and/or drawstring bags from misprinted tee-shirts rescued from a company located in the Cedar Rapids area.

Special collection events of specific materials were also scheduled including an E-waste Collection event in partnership with the Iowa Department of Transportation for government employees in Ames and surrounding areas.

Area resource specialists with IWE have celebrated Earth month in this manner for the past 32 years. While the program is not as old as Earth Day it supports the original goal of Earth Day founders in reducing environmental impacts. Since IWE's inception in 1990 through Earth Day 2022, area resource specialists have diverted almost 4.3 million tons of materials from Iowa's landfills resulting in saving Iowans just under \$127 million.

For more information about the IWE including contact information for your area resource specialist and IWE's searchable materials database visit <https://iwe.iowadnr.gov/>. If you are interested in making a tee shirt bag at home, you can find step-by-step instructions at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ae25PQUXt3o&t=8s>.



For more information about the Iowa Waste Exchange, visit the program website [here](#).