

CONSERVATION BEGINS IN YOUR BACKYARD

Healthy soil is the foundation of a good lawn. For mature grass, always choose a fertilizer that is phosphorus-free, unless a soil test shows a need for this nutrient. The best time to feed is in the spring and fall when the grass is actively growing. Use a drop spreader or rotary spreader with a side guard to keep fertilizer on the grass. Set your mower at its highest setting (taller grass is stronger grass). Use a mulching mower, so that grass clippings can be returned to the soil where they will break down and add nutrients and organic matter to the soil. In the fall, mulch leaves using your lawn mower. Sweep leaves, grass clippings and fertilizer that land on drive-ways and sidewalks back on to the grass.

Calendar of Events

AUG 21-29	The Great Darke County Fair	7:00am-midnight, Daily
AUG 30	Sunday Concerts in the Park	7:30pm
SEPT 4	First Friday: Theatre on Third	Dusk
SEPT 6	The YOLO Festival of Races	7:00am Start Time
SEPT 16	Garden/Lawn Soil Samples Due	4:00pm
SEPT 30	Garden/Lawn Soil Sample Results	6:30-8:00pm
SATURDAYS	Downtown Greenville Farmers Market	9:00am-1:00pm
AUG 26-JAN 1	KitchenAid Experience Cooking Classes	10:30am (Wed, Fri, Sat ONLY)

A newsletter for Greenville residents dedicated to reducing storm water impacts on Greenville creeks

The Greenville Storm



Municipal Building
 100 Public Square
 Greenville, OH 45331



The Greenville Storm

This newsletter was developed to inform residents of Greenville about storm water related issues and provide educational information to reduce the impacts of storm water to the Greenville Creek. We hope that the newsletter provides you with helpful information on saving money while protecting the local environment at the same time.



Rain Barrels: Save that Rain Water!

Rain barrels are a rain harvesting system designed to collect rain water for landscape and garden purposes. A few of the advantages of collecting rain water are that it can save you money on your water bill, reduce excess runoff, help keep basements and crawl spaces from flooding and they are inexpensive to install and maintain. The water collected can be used in your garden, your flower beds or for washing your car, boots or tools. Never use this water for drinking or cooking!

Darke SWCD sells rain barrels for \$30. This includes a 55-gallon, plastic barrel and the DIY installation kit. The barrels are blue, but can be painted to fit any landscape décor. Stop in the Darke SWCD office at 1117 Southtowne Court, Greenville to pick up your rain barrel today. Availability is subject to supply, sometimes supplies are limited.

Every year, Darke SWCD and the City of Greenville host a rain barrel workshop. This workshop goes over the benefits of using a rain barrel on your property and then walks you through putting your rain barrel together. By the end of the evening your barrel is complete. The workshops for

2014 were held at Shawnee Prairie in conjunction with the Darke County Park District. There were two workshops with a total of 38 people in attendance.

If you are interested in buying a rain barrel or if you own one and have a few questions, feel free to visit www.darkeswcd.com or call the office at 937.548.1715, extension 3 for all your rain barrel needs.

Tips for Effective Lawn Watering

Here are a collection of tips for being effective when you water your lawn. In a given area, irrigation can account for 40% of water use. If you decide to water your lawn this year, make sure you are efficient!

Make a decision - before the summer heat hits, decide if you are going to water the lawn or let it go dormant. Don't rotate back and forth.

When is it time to water - don't turn the sprinklers on after the first few hot days. It is beneficial to allow the lawn to go

through a little stress, this will increase your lawns root system and overall health.

Water infrequently - because frequent watering promotes shallow root systems. Except on newly seed lawns.

Water early/late in the day - avoid mid-day watering due to excessive evaporation. An early or late in the day watering reduces the amount of evaporation, allowing more water to reach the root zone.

Uniformly water your lawn—avoid flooding and misses. Watch for runoff, maybe apply in several different applications to

allow for penetration in the soil.

Conserve - don't allow water to hit the street, driveway or sidewalk!

Avoid overwatering—not only does this stress the groundwater supply, it also weakens your plant while increasing storm water runoff.

Monitor rainfall—in general, grasses need roughly 3/4-1" of water per week. Keep track of rainfall and don't apply more than is needed. Also, don't water if a rainfall is expected soon.

Keep Your Grass Clippings Out of the Street!

Recent spring rains have many Greenville residents mowing their lawn more often this year. As a reminder, please don't blow your grass clippings in the street. Any grass clippings blown into the street eventually enter the storm drain, which in turn flows into area streams and rivers. The storm water drainage system does not flow to the wastewater treatment plant like the sanitary sewer.

Here are a few tips to consider when mowing your lawn this season:

- Make certain that you aren't blowing your grass clippings into the street.
- When you start mowing your lawn, make the first few passes so that your lawnmower is blowing the clippings into the lawn and not the street.
- If you get grass clippings into the street, take a few moments to use a broom or leaf blower and blow them back in the lawn. DO NOT use a hose to wash them into the street or storm drains!
- You should always mow your lawn when the grass is dry, this helps avoid clumping.
- Set your mower cutting height to 2 or 2 ½ inches. This helps hide your clippings better and makes for a healthier lawn.
- Try to remove only one-third of the grass length per mowing. If your lawn is overgrown, mow it twice. With the first pass, cut at a higher setting. Then a day or two later, lower the mower and cut again.

- In the spring, it is ideal to mow every five days. During the dryer summer months, it may only require a cutting once every two weeks.
- To ensure a good, clean cut, sharpen your mower blades twice per year.

Grass clippings contain nitrogen and phosphorus, which lead to unwanted algae growth in our lakes, ponds and streams. This algae is harmful to our lake system, it blocks sunlight and prevents plant growth. When it dies and decays, it takes oxygen away from fish, creating a hypoxic or "dead zone" in the water.

Here are a few issues created by the disposal of grass clippings or leaves in the street:

- Flooding – blockage of a system creates flooding that could result in property damage.
- Water Quality – leads to an increase in nutrients which can cause algae growth with the potential of killing fish and other aquatic life.
- Safety – potential reduction of traction between vehicles and the roadway.

Keeping leaves and grass clippings out of the streets can have a significant impact on our area waters. By doing this, you are helping to reduce the amount of nitrogen and phosphorus entering our streams. Leaving your grass clippings on the lawn can reduce your annual fertilizer needs and costs, while reducing water pollution.

What to do with those Grass Clippings?

Leave them Lay – by not collecting grass clippings, you are building organic matter and soil health. Grass clippings do not cause thatch in lawns. Returning your grass clippings coupled with proper mowing frequency won't lead to an increase in disease pressure. As a word of caution, be sure to check with your equipment supplier if you are unsure about your mower's ability to operate without a collection bag. Some machines are not designed to operate safely without a bag or other attachment in place.

Use as Garden Mulch – grass clippings can be spread on the garden and used as a mulch to help control weed growth, reduce crusting and soil spattering during rainfall events, and help to moderate soil temperature. As a tip, allow the grass clippings to dry in the sun for a day before spreading, this helps reduce any protection for slugs. If your lawn has been treated with herbicides, do not use the clippings until after your third cutting.

Incorporate in the Soil – if you haven't planted an area of your garden, use the grass clippings as a source of organic matter by incorporating them into your garden.

Compost Them – they are high in nitrogen and demand much more oxygen than leaves. The concern is if the pile becomes anaerobic, it will lead to strong, unpleasant odors. An anaerobic pile also means a reduction in the decomposition rate. As a tip, never compost grass clippings alone, mixing them with leaves helps keep the material aerobic. It is recommended to mix 1 part fresh grass clippings with 3 parts partially composted leaves.

A Great Weed Killing Recipe Made from Your Pantry

If you are tired of pulling weeds and aren't interested in buying herbicides, here is a quick and easy recipe for killing weeds. Remove the strain from your back and wallet by using a few household items to create a proven weed killer. This recipe is harmless to pets and children, so no longer will you have to worry about when you sprayed the weeds. Here are the items you will need: distilled vinegar, salt, dish soap and a spray bottle. That's it! These four items will have you enjoying a weed free garden this summer. Here's how to make your batch today:

STEP 1: Add four quarts of distilled vinegar to a large pan and slowly bring to a boil. Remove from heat. *The fumes from the vinegar can be a little overpowering, try not to inhale them. They are completely harmless, just a little unpleasant to smell.***

STEP 2: Add one cup of salt to the vinegar while it is still hot, stir until they are completely dissolved. Once salt is dissolved, add one tablespoon of dish soap

WHAT IS NEEDED:

4 qt. distilled vinegar

1 c salt

1 tbsp. dish soap

1 large pan

1 spray bottle

to the mixture and stir thoroughly.

***Dish soap helps mixture stick to weed leaves.*

STEP 3: Allow the mixture to cool for several hours. Once it has cooled off, stir and add mixture to your spray bottle.

***Remember to label your bottle, even though this is non-toxic, you want to make sure it is correctly labeled for storage purposes.*

STEP 4: Begin using your weed killer!

Be careful not to spray other plants in your garden with this mixture, it will kill grass and vegetable plants too. This recipe is harmless to pets and children and can be used with total confidence. Use it today and start enjoying your weed-free garden.

What is Storm Water Runoff?

Storm water runoff is rain that falls onto the streets, parking lots, sports fields, gravel lots, rooftops and other developed areas and flows directly into the nearby rivers and streams. That rain picks up and mixes with anything that is on the ground it hits. The polluted runoff then rushes into a nearby storm drain heads directly into Greenville Creek and the Stillwater Watershed. This storm water runoff enters these waters without being cleaned at a wastewater treatment plant.

Here are just a few of the things mixing with storm water: Oil, grease, metals and coolants from vehicles; fertilizers, pesticides and other chemicals from homes and gardens; bacteria from pet wastes; soil from construction sites and bare areas; soaps from car and equipment washing; accidental spills of all kinds, leaky storage containers, and whatever else ends up on the ground.

Storm water runoff is a problem that a community can manage, make sure you are doing your part in keeping our water clean.

What is a Watershed?

A watershed is an area of land that drains to a particular point along a stream. Whenever the City of Greenville receives precipitation, the majority of the water running off the streets, driveways, and lawns enter Greenville Creek, which is a tributary to the Stillwater River.

Within each watershed there are complex systems of urban, rural, agricultural, and natural areas that have a variety of positive and negative impacts on water quality. It is important that as a community, we realize the impacts and how to reduce the negative effects to the environment.

Many urban residents have been implementing practices like rain barrels, rain gardens, green spaces, and a variety of conservation practices to reduce the negative impacts on water quality. Conservation practices like no-till, nutrient management, cover crops, and grass filtering areas have been implemented into the agricultural areas to help improve water quality. As a community, we need to remember that "We All Live Down Stream".

