



# 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 this newsletter provides you with helpful information on saving money while protecting the local environment at the same time.*

## Backyard Conservation: Mulching

Mulching is one of the simplest and most beneficial practices you can use in the garden. Mulch is simply a protective layer of a material that is spread on top of the soil. Mulches can either be organic, such as grass clippings, straw, bark chips or similar materials, or inorganic, such as stones, brick chips and plastic. Both organic and inorganic mulches have numerous benefits.

### **Benefits of mulch:**

- Protects the soil from erosion
- Reduces compaction from the impact of heavy rains
- Conserves moisture, reducing the need for frequent waterings
- Maintains a more even soil temperature
- Prevents weed growth
- Keeps fruits and vegetables clean
- Keeps feet clean, allowing access to garden even when damp
- Provides a “finished” look to the garden

Organic mulches also improve the condition of the soil. As these mulches slowly decompose, they provide organic matter which helps keep the soil loose. This improves root growth, increases the infiltration of water, and also improves the water-holding capacity of the soil. Organic matter is a source of plant nutrients and provides an ideal environment for earthworms and other beneficial soil organisms.

While inorganic mulches have their place in certain landscapes, they lack the soil improving properties of organic mulches. Inorganic mulches, because of their permanence, may be difficult to remove if you decide to change your garden plans at a later date.

### **When to apply mulch?**

If you are using mulches in your vegetable garden or flower garden, it is best to apply them after the soil has warmed up in the spring. Cool, wet soils tend to slow seed germination and increase the decay of seeds and seedlings. If adding additional layers of mulch to existing perennial beds, wait until the soil has warmed completely.

### **Additional Guidelines**

- Do not apply mulch directly in contact with plants. Leave an inch or so of space next to plants to help prevent diseases flourishing from excessive humidity.
- Remove weeds before spreading mulch.



Source: nracs.usda.gov

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## What can you do to help our local streams?

Did you know that the water that flows into storm drains along our streets and curbs flows directly into our streams and rivers without treatment? Backyard conservation practices not only improve the quality of our streams but can also reduce the potential for flooding. Here are some tips to minimize runoff from your property:

- Install rain barrels to capture roof runoff
- Grow a rain garden with water-tolerant plants to filter runoff
- Wash your car at a commercial car wash
- If washing your car at home, do it in a grassy area with bio-degradable, phosphorus-free soap
- Use a drop pan to catch leaks from your car until you can get them fixed
- Bury pet waste, flush it or bag it and dispose of it in the garbage to eliminate the source of bacterial contamination
- Minimize the use of pesticides and fertilizers on your lawn and follow label instructions



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## A Natural Way to Kill Weeds

When looking for a natural alternative to herbicides, try the recipe below to quickly kill weeds. Acetic acid in the vinegar and the salt are good at drawing moisture from the weeds. Dish soap acts as a surfactant, reducing surface tension that can cause the weed-killing spray to bead on the leaves instead of being absorbed by the plant.

Depending on the weed and the season, the results can be speedy and effective. This solution does not penetrate the root system, so multiple treatments will probably be necessary to keep the weeds at bay. Also, sunshine makes a big difference. Keep a spray bottle of this homemade solution to combat weeds that may pop up along walkways, fences or house foundation. Be careful not to spray plants that you want to keep!



### Natural Weed Killer Recipe

1 gallon white vinegar

1 cup salt

1 tablespoon liquid dish soap

Combine ingredients in a spray bottle and treat weeds at the sunniest time of day for the best results.

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## Looking for a way to help pollinators?



The 2018 Annual Tree Seedling sale is a great opportunity to purchase shrubs and trees that help our local pollinators. There are several new species offered this year to encourage pollinator habitats, including arrowwood, American plum and highbush cranberry. Check out our website at [www.darkeswcd.com](http://www.darkeswcd.com) for the order form or stop in the office. Orders will be accepted until March 23rd and pick-up will be April 10th-12th.

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# Lawn & Garden Soil Sampling Offered

## Why do I need a soil test?

1. Maintaining Proper Soil Fertility— Soil tests take the guesswork out of fertilization and are very cost effective; they eliminate wasteful spending on fertilizer products. Test results and recommendations help protect our environment by discouraging the over-application of plant nutrients.
2. Guiding Plant Selection— Some plants will grow in a wide range of soil pH levels, while others require a narrow range of pH. A soil test will determine whether the soil is acidic or alkaline. It is the most cost effective way to match the pH requirements of plants that you select with the pH of the soil in which you are planting.
3. Performing Plant Problem Diagnostics— Soil tests are an important tool for learning why plants lack vigor or are showing symptoms of other plant health issues. A soil test may reveal whether the symptom is caused by the lack of an essential nutrient, a problem with the soil pH or both.



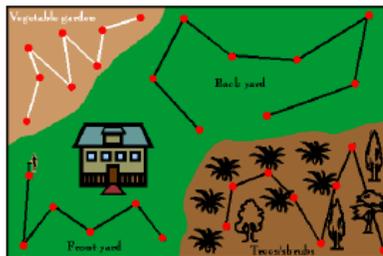
**\$15.00**



Have you ever wanted to pull soil samples from your lawn or garden but not been sure what to do with them? Are you interested in learning how to responsibly improve your lawn's health or your garden's production? If you answered "yes" to either of these questions, then this soil sampling opportunity is for you. Darke SWCD will be a drop off point for your soil samples. Darke SWCD has information on how to properly pull a representative soil sample available online or in the office. Once your sample is pulled, bring it to our office by April 20th before 4:00PM. Your soil sample will be sent to the lab for analysis and results will be back in your hands to make the appropriate adjustments for this year's garden crop, flower bed planting or lawn mowing season. Call us at 937-548-1715, Ext. 3, email [jar-ed.coppess@darkeswcd.com](mailto:jar-ed.coppess@darkeswcd.com) or visit our website, [www.darkeswcd.com](http://www.darkeswcd.com), for more information.

**Responsible fertilizer application begins with understanding what your soil needs!**

**RIGHT:** Example of how to pull a representative soil sample from your lawn or garden area. Pull 12-18 plugs in a zig-zag pattern.



**LEFT:** A soil probe makes pulling samples easy. Stop by the office to borrow one of ours "free of charge".

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

## Rain Barrels

Did you know that you can buy a rain barrel kit from Darke SWCD?

A rain barrel is a container that collects rainwater from your roof and gutters. The collected water then can be used for watering plants and lawns and even washing cars! It can help reduce your water bill and the amount of runoff from your property.

Rain barrels are easy to install and maintain, stop by the office to purchase your kit for only \$40.00.



## Calendar of Events

<b>APR 6</b>	<b>First Friday: Scavenger Hunt &amp; Petting Zoo</b> <i>6:00-9:00pm</i>
<b>APR 20</b>	<b>Spring Soil Sampling</b>
<b>May 4</b>	<b>First Friday: Upper Floor Tour</b> <i>6:00-9:00pm</i>
<b>May 19</b>	<b>Downtown Planting Day</b> <i>8:00-11:00am</i>
<b>June 1</b>	<b>First Fridays: Live Music &amp; Volunteer Fair</b> <i>6:00-9:00pm</i>
<b>SATURDAYS</b>	<b>Downtown Greenville Farmers Market</b> <i>9:00am-1:00pm beginning June 2</i>
<b>June TBD</b>	<b>Educational Canoe Float</b> <i>8:30am</i>



Municipal Building  
100 Public Square  
Greenville, OH 45331