

Franklin Soil and Water Backyard Conservation Update

August 28, 2014

Registration Open for “Healthy Home Lawn Care & Soil Testing” Workshop

Is your go-to response for a sad-looking lawn another round of fertilizer? Are you of the mindset that if one pound of nitrogen is good, then two pounds will be twice as good? Does your turf grass look like the Masters is taking place in your front yard next weekend? Or do you just want a decent-looking lawn without spending every spare moment tending it?

If any of these apply, then register for the upcoming Healthy Home Lawn Care & Soil Testing Workshop on Saturday, September 20 from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. at our office, 1404 Goodale Boulevard, Suite 100, Columbus 43212.

The presenters will be Pam Sherratt, turf grass specialist in OSU's Department of Horticulture and Crop Science and Steve Baker USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service state soil scientist. Pam will speak on lawn care basics and Steve will cover soil testing, central Ohio soils and nutrient requirements for different kinds of gardens.

The \$10 fee includes refreshments and a soil test kit that enables you to sample your soil, send it in to the lab and then receive the results. If you are not interested in the soil test, you can register for \$5.00. [You can register online](#) or, if you would rather pay by check, you can contact Sara Ernst at sernst@franklinswcd.org or (614) 486-9613, ext. 125.

OSU Extension Brings Back Soil Testing

Talk about timely! We just heard that OSU's Franklin County Extension office is assisting landowners by making available convenient, low-cost soil testing. Testing is available for gardens, home lawns, farm fields, and commercial horticulture operations. The cost is \$11 per sample, and instructions are included. Fertilizer/lime recommendations are also included with the test results. Analysis is done at a non-biased university soil testing laboratory. [For more information click](#) or call (614) 866-6900. The Franklin County Extension office is open from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Those Pesky Brown Marmorated Stink Bugs

Aaron's been having trouble with hordes of stink bugs in his garden. So Sara suggested he read [this page from the “Organic Gardening” magazine web site](#). As always, if you are having trouble with a garden or lawn pest, we suggest you contact the Franklin County Master Gardener Garden Information Line at (614) 688-4769. The line is staffed by Master Gardener volunteers on Monday and Friday from 9:00 a.m. to noon and on the first Wednesday of each month from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. We are big fans of the OSU Extension Master Gardener program and the Master Gardeners themselves.

Learn More about *Your* Soil and Water District at our Annual Meeting

For those of you who are new to the Franklin Soil and Water family, here's a brief rundown: each county in Ohio (and most in the US) has a conservation district. In Ohio, soil and water conservation

districts are subdivisions of the State of Ohio, but are tied closely to their county government, local municipalities and landowners. We are led by a five-member [Board of Supervisors](#), members of which are elected in a public election to three-year terms. Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District has been assisting landowners since 1946.

Each year, all conservation districts in Ohio have an Annual Meeting where we celebrate the year's conservation success, hand out conservation awards and hold the election for one or two members to the Board of Supervisors. The 2014 Annual Meeting is being held in our new offices at 1404 Goodale Boulevard, Suite 100, Columbus, OH 43212 on September 18, from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m.

The \$20 registration fee covers your choice of items from two local food trucks, the Paddy Wagon and the Green Meanie, beverages and desert. From 5:00 to 7:00 p.m., you can eat, network with staff and Board members, bid on silent auction items, meet local elected officials and local, state and federal government staff, and check out sponsor displays. The program, including presentation of the Conservation Stewardship and Teacher of Year Awards begins at 7:00 p.m. [Read more about the Annual Meeting including how to register.](#)

You do **not** need to register for the Annual Meeting to vote in the Board of Supervisors' election. You can request an absentee ballot and mail or bring it to our office any time before 5:00 p.m. on September 18. You may also vote from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. during the Annual Meeting. [Read more about voting in the Board of Supervisors' election.](#)

We'd like to thank these Annual Meeting sponsors who make it all possible: American Electric Power, McMahon DeGulis LLP, Greif/EarthMinded, Rockford Homes, Scotts Miracle-Gro Company, Continental Office Supply and Schottenstein Homes LLC.

Do You PUP?

PUP is an acronym for something many dog families would rather not think about—Pick Up Poop. It is also a new campaign from the City of Columbus Department of Public Utilities to encourage dogs' humans to pick up after their canine friends. Dog poop can carry pathogens that pose health risks to humans, other dogs and wildlife. Dog poop also contributes to nutrient contamination of local rivers and streams. And it is not "natural" to leave it! Once while walking my friend Moose in Whetstone Park, I was accused by another dog walker of contributing to land-fill overuse by picking up after Moose. She told me that since dog poop is natural and will decompose I should leave it. Well, yes it does decompose, often in our waterways where it is carried by sheet flow from rainwater runoff, contributing nitrogen and bacteria pollution. And when wolves roamed Ohio the family groups were widely spaced—never reaching the density of dogs in an urban park, so the amount of poop is definitely not natural. Besides it isn't very civic minded to leave dog poop for your neighbor to step in!

AND, if you take the PUP pledge, you get a cool PUP bandana! Show that you care about healthy water and healthy dogs by [taking the PUP pledge!](#)

It's Not Too Late to Attend a Rain Barrel Workshop!

If you're like me and plan more than you can possibly do, and you've been planning to put in a rain barrel this summer, maybe this will help. There are still three rain barrel workshops you can attend to learn all about harvesting rainwater and take a barrel home with you:

~ September 6, 10:00 a.m. at Oakland Nursery Education Center, 1156 Oakland Park Ave., Columbus (This workshop also includes rain gardens.)

~ September 13, 10:00 a.m. at the Minerva Park Community Center, 2829 Minerva Lake Rd, Columbus

~ September 27, 10:00 a.m. at the Hilliard Community Center, 3800 Veterans Memorial Drive, Hilliard

You can [register for a workshop and pay \\$55 for a rain barrel online](#), you can mail in [this registration form with a check for \\$55](#), or you can call Kristin at (614) 486-9613 and tell her that you would like to attend the workshop but are not interested in purchasing a rain barrel at this time (no fee to attend). If you have not registered to attend a workshop or aren't ready to purchase a barrel at this time, you will be given a voucher at the workshop that allows you to purchase a barrel at the subsidized \$55 cost at our office at a later time.

If you are a more self-directed learner, [you can also watch the stormwater / rain barrel installation slideshow online](#), pass the quiz, pay online and pick up your barrel at our office, 1404 Goodale Boulevard, Suite 100, Columbus, OH 43212.

Remember that to participate in the GreenSpot Rain Barrel Program, you must reside in your home in Franklin County (or in a Franklin County municipality that extends into a neighboring county).

Sara's Fall Notes on Rain Gardens:

~ Many rain garden plants have bloomed and are now setting seed; if you do not want these plants to volunteer elsewhere, it's a good time to deadhead spent flowers and collect seed for other projects.

~ Monarchs aren't the only insects that rely on [milkweed](#)—[milkweed beetles](#), like the monarch, have few predators because of the bad-tasting compound found in milkweed sap that makes them toxic. They'll appear to feed on seedpods in late summer and early fall, and can be problematic to gardeners hoping to propagate seeds, but otherwise cause no serious damage. Aphids, [also pictured here feeding on swamp milkweed](#), commonly infest milkweeds and feed on their sap. In high numbers, they will stress and kill the plant and can be removed by hand or with a strong stream of water.

~ No doubt you're familiar with the brown marmorated stink bug that hails from Asia (see item above), but [here's a picture](#) of a (not entirely unattractive!) native green stink bug nymph hiding out on an immature hibiscus seed pod. Like most insects, they're capable of doing some harm, but we all need to eat. Generally, native plants are well-equipped to tolerate some damage and the birds will thank you for the extra bugs. Cultural practices (such as garden sanitation and crop rotation) result in vigorous plants that are less likely to be attacked by pests and diseases.

~ And simply because I like it, here is Sara's photo "[sleepy bee in hibiscus flower](#)."

Rain Barrel Pickup This Saturday—August 30

For anyone who hasn't picked up his or her rain barrel yet from an online order, we will be having a Saturday Rain Barrel Pickup on August 30 from 9:30 a.m. until noon. Of course, you can always stop by Monday through Friday from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. too. We just like to give you a weekend day every so often in case you can't get here during business hours. You still have a few months to benefit from harvesting rainwater!

When Is a Weed a Weed?

Have you ever wondered why one introduced plant becomes invasive and another doesn't? David was pondering [this purple loosestrife seedhead](#) with its kajillion seeds the other day and wrote [this short article](#) on one of the reasons that some weeds spread so efficiently.

Registration Open for "The Basics of Seasonal High Tunnels" Workshop

The workshop will include the basics on seasonal high tunnels along with the risks and benefits of using high tunnels. The use and management of rain barrels for water conservation will also be covered. A tour of the high tunnel at [Franklinton Gardens](#) will give workshop participants an opportunity to ask questions and hear first-hand experiences of using a high tunnel to extend production. [Brochure with agenda and speakers.](#)

This is a two-day workshop:

Tuesday, September 9, from 6:00 to 8:45 p.m. at Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District, 1404 Goodale Blvd., Suite 100, Columbus, OH 43212, and

Wednesday, September 10, from 6:00 to 8:15 p.m. at **Franklinton Gardens**, 909 w. Rich St., Columbus, OH 43222.

To register, contact Eliezer Ortiz Barbosa, USDA NRCS soil conservationist, at (740) 362-4011, ext. 112 or eliezer.ortiz@oh.usda.gov. Please give your full name, phone number and the number of people attending. There is no charge for the workshop, but space is limited.

Hope you've enjoyed this Backyard Conservation Update. Feel free to contact me with topics that interest you or questions you may have about conservation in Franklin County. You can also contact us through Facebook (www.facebook.com/franklinsoilandwater) or Twitter (@franklinswcd).

To be added or removed from this list, please contact Mary Ann Brouillette at (614) 486-9613 x 113 or mbrouillette@franklinswcd.org, or just reply to this e-mail.

Have a great Labor Day weekend and don't forget to play outside!

Mary Ann

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