



Backyard Conversation Connecting Community + Conservation

Welcome to the Backyard Conversation! Each month we'll be sharing a conservation topic from a more personal viewpoint for our readers. To make this successful, I want to hear feedback from you! I'll include a poll at the bottom regarding our topic and share links to some of our partner organizations with similar messages. So, let's get to it!

Fall Lawn Care Leaf & Mower Management



With more residents spending time at home, fall is a great time of year to take simple actions to protect our water. If you live in an area with lots of mature trees, make a commitment to remove street leaves before the rain. It's an easy, yet very effective action that those living in the urban environment can take to reduce the amount of nutrients that wash into our waters each fall. When it rains, stormwater flows through leaf piles in streets creating a nutrient-rich "leaf tea" that travels through storm sewers making its way to our rivers and streams and can cause our waters to become green, murky and unhealthy.

But Aren't Leaves Natural?

When leaves fall in the autumn, they quickly decompose, and rain washes the natural fertilizers out of them. When this happens in a forest or on your lawn, they are recycled into the soil and trapped there helping plants grow in the spring. But when leaves, grass clippings or other organic materials are dumped near streams or creeks, natural fertilizers go right into our water, feeding algae and bacteria while depriving fish of oxygen. This affects everyone who pays for infrastructure that keeps drinking water safe, and streets free of flooding.

Keep streets leaf-free this fall! It's easy! Before the

rain...

1. Safety remove leaves from the street in front of your home and nearby storm drains.
2. Removes whole leaves from grass, and shred with mower into small, dime-sized pieces. You are improving your soil while managing autumn leaves.
3. Too many to mow? Leaves are a source of carbon-rich “browns” to balance your composting “greens”. Many people lack browns and are too often stuck with nutrient poor, highly-processed paper materials. Leaves can also be composted all by themselves.
4. Contact your Community for Fall Leaf Collection Guidelines. Your community may have scheduled yard waste recycling, which may require bagging or raking leaves to the curb.



Get Grassy Fall Lawn Care Video



Mower Management

By now you might be dreaming cooler temps, sweater weather, pumpkin spice everything, and the end of mowing season, BUT before you pat yourself on the back for being an outdoor rockstar all season long, make sure to do some mower maintenance before saying goodbye for the winter.

- Remove or completely top off the fuel.
- Remove the battery and bring it indoors for the winter. Clean the battery well, removing any dust, grease, or dirt.
- Remove the spark plug and spray a shot of oil into the cylinder.
- Remove and clean or replace the mower’s air filter and fuel filter.
- Change the oil. Drain all the oil from the mower and replace it with the specific type/weight recommended by the manufacturer.
- Scrape the mower deck. Tip the mower onto its side and scrape loose any caked-on grass clippings from the underside of the deck. (Grass clippings contain moisture that can cause rust.) Spray on a liberal coating of WD-40.
- Sharpen the blades! Be 100% ready for when spring rolls around. Dull blades can harm grass.

Find additional resources on ["fine-tuning" your mower](#) for the fall & winter

POLL TIME

When is the last time you sharpened your mower blades?

Already did that!

Select

Last fall...sometime.

Select

You're supposed to sharpen them?

Select

Rain Garden Cost-Shares

Gahanna - Grove City - Hilliard - New Albany -
Obetz - Reynoldsburg - Westerville

We have partnered with the communities above to offer reimbursements up to \$250 for plants, mulch or compost used when residents install a rain garden on their property! The purpose of the rain garden cost-share assistance grant is to financially assist property owners within the participating City/Municipality with the placement of rain gardens on their property. Eligibility for this grant requires that the property be located within the participating location, and the garden completed the current year of application.

Franklin Soil and Water will provide assistance and on-site visits during the process once pre-screening has been completed. A limited number of grants are typically available each year. Contact [Sara Ernst](#) at (614) 486-9613 to see if funds are available or to review an application for your community.

Visit www.franklinswcd.org/rain-garden-cost-share for additional details!

Next Month

October- Be The Change for Stormwater Awareness
Ohio Stormwater Week is October 18-24, 2020

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Connect with us online!



