

www.franklinswcd.org

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Frankly Speaking

4Rs in the City: Fertilizer and You

Gardeners in central Ohio frequently receive an abrupt, unwelcome introduction to soils the first time they attempt to insert an obstinate shovel into the ground. Gone is the loamy forest soil that may have been there originally; in its place is hard and compacted subsoil, devoid of organic matter and structure.

Rather than being the stuff of Better Homes and Gardens, your “topsoil” is what a contractor molded to support your house just right, and get water to drain away from your house. Our romantic notions destroyed, we still expect our soil to support green grass, vegetable or perennial gardens, and shrubs and trees. Because healthy soil means that plants are better able to

tolerate tough conditions like drought, bugs, and disease, we manipulate it in a variety of ways: build raised beds, compost, plant cover crops, mulch, till, and aerate. And finally, we fertilize.

Fertilization is appealing to both home gardeners and agricultural producers in its immediacy. But it can get complicated! Soil characteristics include biological, physical, and chemical properties, all of which are interrelated. For instance, healthy soil contains 17 nutrients: three (carbon, hydrogen, and oxygen) are provided by air and water, and the remaining elements are inherent in the soil. However, pH can affect whether or not a plant is able to absorb them, and soil-dwelling animals present in organic matter (like compost,

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GPS receivers used by Franklin Soil and Water staff use satellites from both the US and Russia, giving them a margin of error in inches.

Thank you to our Annual Meeting sponsors: American Electric Power, Rockford Homes Inc., McMahon DeGulis LLP, EarthMinded, Continental Office Environments, The Scotts Miracle-Gro Company and Shottenstein Homes

2014’s Annual Meeting focusing on Conservation for the Future

Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District’s 68th Annual Meeting is Thursday, September 18, 2014 from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. This year’s annual meeting has a few changes in store that we hope you’ll enjoy.

We are holding it right here, in our new office at 1404 Goodale Boulevard, Suite 100, Columbus 43212. There will be many opportunities to network with local government staff and elected officials, private-sector partners, landowners and volunteers as you explore our new space, visit sponsor displays, and choose your dinner from two food trucks. Yes, you’ll have a good time, but you’ll also see how we can better host workshops and Web

seminars, collaborate and work with partners, and fulfill our mission using the new facility. Another benefit of the new format is a lower ticket price, \$20.

Voting for two members of our Board of Supervisors will take place from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m. (Read more about the election, voting eligibility and candidates on pages 2 and 3.)

A review of activities and projects from the last year—and where we’re going in the future—starts at 7:00 p.m. Then it’s our favorite part of the Annual Meeting—the conservation awards! The Conservation Stewardship Award is awarded to landowners, businesses or organizations that over the past year have exemplified our

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Annual Meeting

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mission of promoting responsible land-use decisions for the conservation, protection and improvement of soil and water resource. The Educator of the Year Award is presented to a formal or nonformal educator whose willingness to go the extra mile helps students appreciate nature and understand our environmental interaction.

The Annual Meeting is also a fundraiser for the Conservation Fund, through guests' purchases of rain barrel raffle tickets and silent auction items. The Conservation Fund supports student, landowner and community conservation projects throughout Franklin County.

Last year's silent auction raised \$1,250, enabling us to award 2014 mini-grants to Franklinton Gardens, Green Columbus and the Northwest Branch of Worthington Libraries. This year, we can now accept credit cards for silent auction purchases, so come prepared to shop!

The annual meeting registration form is on page 4, if you want to mail a check or purchase order. You can also register online using the improved shopping cart experience we initiated for the 2014 Spring Conservation Sale.



Board of Supervisors' Election September 18

In accordance with Chapter 1515 of the Ohio Revised Code, an election of two supervisors of Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District will be held.

Residents or landowners, firms and corporations that own land or occupy land in Franklin County and are 18 years of age and older may vote for supervisors. A non-resident landowner, firm or corporation must provide an affidavit of eligibility, which includes designation of a voting representative, prior to casting a ballot.

There are three ways an eligible voter can cast a ballot: (1) at the

annual meeting, which will take place September 18, 2014, from **5:00 to 8:00 p.m.**; (2) at the Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District office from **8:30 a.m. until 3:00 p.m.** on September 18, 2014; or (3) vote absentee by requesting the proper absentee request forms from the Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District office, 1404 Goodale Boulevard, Suite 100, Columbus, OH 43212.

For more information, call the office at (614) 486-9613 or visit the Web site at www.franklinswcd.org.

Cost Share Opportunities

Do Things Naturally with
Backyard Conservation!

Canal Winchester, Gahanna, New Albany & Westerville

-  These municipalities promote healthy streams and habitats.
-  Rain gardens absorb rainwater runoff, controlling pollution, erosion and flooding.
-  Native flowering plants, shrubs and grasses are a beautiful addition to your landscape.

Funding is available to help homeowners in these municipalities plant a rain garden. **Hurry, funds are limited!**

For more information, contact Sara Ernst at Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District (614) 486-9613.

By working with Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District staff, residents are eligible for a reimbursement of \$250 for rain garden plants and materials.

Candidates for Board of Supervisors



TOM SHOCKLEY has over 22 years experience in public service, including his role as Franklin County Sanitary Engineer. He holds undergraduate degrees in mechanical engineering and business administration, and a Master of Public Administration from The Ohio State University.

Prior to his years in public service, Tom was in private practice for over 20 years as a mechanical/civil engineer working in both the civil and environmental fields. Some of his major accomplishments were in the field of underground coal mining as manager of Jeffery Mining's Quality Engineering department.

As Director of the Franklin County's department of water and sewer, Tom oversaw a department with both wastewater and water management responsibilities. In addition, the department's Water Quality Partnership sewer improvements program began in 2001 with the mandate of connecting over 3,000 homes into central sanitary sewer and eliminating pollution from failed septic and aeration systems. Tom turned a department that was heading toward privatization and deeply in debt, to one that was self sustaining in just less than one year.

Tom is currently the treasurer and fiscal agent for the Franklin Soil and Water Board of Supervisors.



DAVID DONOFRIO is a lifelong resident of Franklin County, a former Franklin Soil and Water Board Supervisor (who has served as both chair and vice chair), and a current associate board member who heads the District's Government Outreach Committee.

Committed to conservation, David has also served in leadership capacities for a host of other organizations throughout the community, and believes the best solutions begin at home. He is a strong supporter of the District's GIS mapping, educational and backyard conservation efforts, and having attended the District's Strategic Planning retreat in 2013, looks forward to expanding these programs as the District grows.

Also, having run for state office and worked in the Statehouse formerly, he has the experience to ensure that, through our continued outreach efforts, the District will maintain both its state and local funding streams, regardless of ideological differences in the legislature.

Outside of the District, David works as the Special Projects Manager for Tailored Management, and he resides in northwest Columbus with his partner Ryan and cat, Ohio. He would be honored to earn your support.



JOHN MOOREHEAD is a professional engineer with Advanced Civil Design, Inc. located in their Gahanna office. John specializes in watershed planning, surface water protection, floodplain management, and construction site erosion control. John holds a B.S. in Civil Engineering from Ohio University, focusing on environmental engineering.

Over the past seven years, John has produced stormwater engineering solutions for projects in 26 states, providing experience with the resource management policies employed by a broad range of regulatory agencies. With technical expertise in green infrastructure, non-point source pollution control, and low impact development, John provides cutting edge stormwater management solutions in urban environments. In support of state and federal agencies he has performed hundreds of fluvial geomorphology studies assessing threats to infrastructure caused by stream bank erosion and channel instability.

John is a resident of Sharon Township, and is active in the local chapter of the American Society of Civil Engineers. As a member of the Board of Supervisors, John hopes to serve the Soil and Water Conservation District in their mission to protect our county's natural resources.



2014 Annual Meeting: Conservation for the Future

September 18, 2014 from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm

Come see our new office at 1404 Goodale Boulevard,
Suite 100, Columbus, OH 43212

The evening will begin with networking, touring the office space, and dining from food trucks between 5:00 and 7:30 p.m. There will be a review of District activities and projects beginning at 7:00 p.m., followed by the presentation of the Conservation Stewardship Award and Environmental Educator of the Year.

All proceeds from the silent auction go to Franklin Soil and Water's Conservation Fund, which supports student, landowner and community conservation projects throughout the county.

You can also participate in your soil and water conservation district by casting a vote for two members of the five-person, publicly elected Board of Supervisors. Election rules and applications for absentee ballots can be found at www.franklinswcd.org.

Please complete the registration and mail it with a check to Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District, 1404 Goodale Blvd., Suite 100, Columbus, OH 43212, or visit www.franklinswcd.org and register online.

Name _____ E-mail _____

Organization _____ Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip code _____

Guests' Names _____

Please indicate the number of Annual Meeting tickets requested and the total cost below.

Number of tickets at \$20.00 each _____, for a total cost of _____.

Please make checks payable to Franklin Soil and Water.

Please register by Monday, September 15th. Tickets will be mailed, if time allows; otherwise, they can be picked up at the meeting. Please present your tickets at the door.

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aged manure, or peat) greatly influence structure for good drainage that most plants need.

Nitrogen and phosphorous are naturally present in soil and water, and are two nutrients essential to plant growth. But fertilizer use, municipal and home sewage systems, and animal manure runoff have resulted in excesses that cause harmful algae blooms. While point-source pollution has been alleviated as a result of 1972's Clean Water Act, dissolved phosphorus levels in Ohio's waterways have increased. Local beach closures are annoying, but numerous oxygen-depleted dead zones in Lake Erie's central basin and in the Gulf of Mexico paint a bigger (and scarier) picture of how our actions are connected via water.

In Ohio, the 4R model (<http://www.nutrientstewardship.com/>) has become a framework for reducing nutrients in our waterways. Though primarily aimed at agricultural producers, the approach is a simple and adaptable method for anyone wishing to improve his or her soil's productivity, including homeowners, landscape services, school districts, and parks. The concept is to use the right fertilizer source, at the right rate, at the right time, with the right placement. Efficient and smart utilization of fertilizer makes sense, resulting in better water quality, fewer dollars spent, and optimal productivity as ever-increasing demands are placed upon our food systems.

Here are some tips on how to implement the 4 R's:

Right source: Get your soil tested to see what your soil is lacking. It's like a blood test, telling us what's hidden from view. They're relatively inexpensive at around \$15, especially when considering the price of purchasing fertilizers or new plants.



TOMORROW

You can tell what nutrients are in a fertilizer, and in what proportion, by looking at its ratio on the bag. A 100-pound bag of 10-0-10 fertilizer, for example, includes 10 pounds of nitrogen, zero phosphorus, 10 pounds of potassium and 80 pounds of filler. (Many fertilizers often include micronutrients as well, but they aren't listed).

Right rate: Determine the square footage of your property, and how much you can spread using your equipment. Calibrate your spreader—manufacturers often provide recommended settings since products vary in their weight and consistency. Finally, ensure your soil sample is representative of the area you're working with.

Right time: When plants are actively growing, they're more likely to show signs of deficiencies and utilize fertilizer. But avoid applying it if rain is forecasted in the next couple of days. Knowing your plant material helps; for example, some perennials are heavy feeders that can benefit from both spring and summer applications, but others (particularly natives) won't benefit much from fertilizer, and may even react negatively.

Right place: Consider incorporating materials (especially manure and compost) into the soil, rather than placing it on top. Use deflectors on spreaders to keep fertilizer where it's needed; if you do manage to get some on driveways, sidewalks, or streets,

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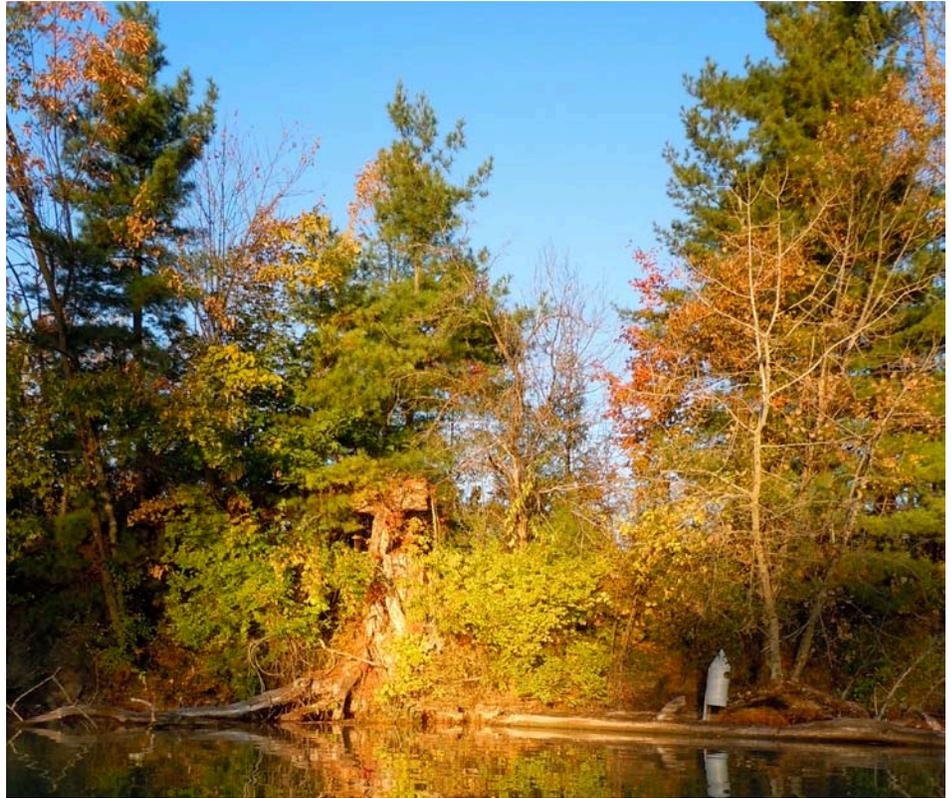
Soil, Drainage, and “Help! My Yard is Flooded!”

Much of western Franklin County is hydric Kokomo soil that requires subsurface drainage to lower the groundwater table. According to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service website, hydric soils are those “that formed under conditions of saturation, flooding, or ponding long enough during the growing season to develop anaerobic conditions” (water replacing air in pore spaces).¹

Agricultural practices manage high groundwater by installing tile systems to lower the groundwater table and allow farming to take place. Kokomo and other hydric soils are some of the most productive soils because of the available moisture capacity but this can pose a problem when saturated conditions occur for extended periods. Without proper drainage or uptake by plants, these soils will pond water.

Home owners located in urban areas with these hydric soil types generally have little issue with wet foundations or surface ponding because of the vast network of subsurface drainage already installed, including their neighbors’ homes, streets, and sewer systems. Rural and single large-lot developments do not benefit from this, but can encounter systematic tile drainage left over from old agricultural practices. Old tile systems encountered during excavation need proper attention or there’s a risk of tying the foundation drain and sump pump to a much larger drainage system, resulting in sump pump overuse.

Franklin Soil and Water offers drainage assistance to area residents but it is up to the resident to make the necessary changes based on the



recommendations provided. While drainage issues can be caused by a multitude of factors, water still flows downhill and collects in low areas. Often these low areas, like groundwater, are not apparent to the land owner. Proper surface drainage away from structures is needed. Check gutters, downspouts and grading around a structure to ensure runoff is not collecting near the foundation. Many times downspout extensions are needed to move rooftop runoff a distance away from a structure particularly if a basement is included. Basements that are excavated in soils known to have high moisture content often need a sump pump. A sump pump can lower the groundwater table around a foundation and maintain dry conditions below grade.

Soils have a natural ability to hold water and even hydric soils can be managed

for development purposes; however, as we have all seen this year, extended wet seasons cause saturated soil and more effort is needed to remove that water. This will mean sump pumps will cycle more frequently and for extended periods until the soils have reached the field moisture capacity.

Many of the remaining undeveloped sites in Franklin County are sites with these types of physical limitations but most of the limitations can be overcome with knowledge beforehand and proper engineering. Soils are the very foundation on which we place one of our largest investments, our homes and livelihoods. Be sure you know the soil type and physical properties before investing. *Caveat emptor!*

¹ http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/pr/soils/?cid=nrcs141p2_037283

Pollinators and Us

If you are like me, when you think of pollination, honey bees are the first organisms that come to mind. There are approximately 200,000 species of pollinators worldwide, including 4,000 native species of bees in the United States. While 99.5% of pollinators are insects, some mammals, birds and even reptiles serve as pollinators. Among the pollinating insects of North America are bees, wasps, flies, beetles, butterflies, and moths.

Scientists report that 60 to 80% of plant species depend on animal pollinators, and approximately 35% of crops rely on pollinators. These crops are valued at \$20 billion in the United States, with \$3 billion of that number contributed by native pollinators. Most of our common fruits and berries, such as apples, peaches, pears, apricots, cherries, grapes, watermelons, blackberries, blueberries, and strawberries, depend on pollinators, not to mention vegetables, including beans, lettuce, tomatoes, green peppers, carrots, radishes, cauliflower, and broccoli.

Both honey bee and native pollinator populations have been in decline. While there are multiple causes for the decline, there are things that we can do on our properties to support these crucial organisms. All organisms need appropriate habitat, food and water. The majority of bee species (approximately 70%) nest in the ground. Other nesting sites include dead trees, unkempt areas of rough grass and even rodent holes. One habitat that is not suitable for bees is a well-groomed lawn. Butterflies need host plants for their caterpillars, shelter for their pupae, and flowers and salt/mineral licks for the adults. Having some wet areas for butterflies can also be valuable. Native plants are particularly important for pollinators. For example, native plants are four times more



attractive to native bees than are other plants.

The decline of pollinators has been attributed to such things as the widespread use of pesticides, the loss of variety of flowers and habitat in urban settings, and the prevalence of invasive plants. We tend to see all insects as pests, even though the vast majority of insects are beneficial. Minimizing the use of pesticides and using the least toxic compounds possible, when they are used, will help protect beneficial insects, such as pollinators. Even in urban environments, it is important for pollinators to find food and shelter so that we minimize the number of pollinator deserts.

For more information:

USDA NRCS: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/plantmaterials/technical/publications/?cid=stelprdb1044847>

Xerces Society: <http://www.xerces.org/pollinator-conservation/>

Columbus Dispatch article



Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District

Creating Conservation Solutions for Over 60 Years

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Columbus, Ohio 43212

614.486.9613

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District programs and services are offered on a non-discriminatory basis.

August 2014

Frankly Speaking

Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District

Board of Supervisors

Jessica D'Ambrosio
Katie Renner, Vice Chair
Andrea Salimbene, Chair
Thomas Shockley, Treasurer
Chris Wible

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sweep or blow the fertilizer onto the lawn or landscape beds.

While you're squinting at those numbers on the bag of fertilizer and waiting for Better Homes and Gardens to call, you may wish to attend Franklin Soil and Water's **"Healthy Home Lawncare and Soil Testing" Workshop** on September 20 from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. It will be at our office, 1404 Goodale Blvd. Suite 100, Columbus, Ohio 43212.

Cost is \$10 and includes a basic soil test from a local soil-testing lab. (We give you the envelope; you put soil in and mail.) The cost of attending the workshop without the soil test is \$5.00. Register at www.franklinswcd.org (see "Workshop Information & Online Registration" on left) or by calling (614) 486-9613.

Connect with **your** soil and water conservation district:

- On website: www.franklinswcd.org
- On Facebook: FranklinSoilandWater
- On Twitter: @franklinswcd
- On YouTube: Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District
- Through print newsletters
- Through e-newsletters