



Monthly Stormwater Planner

For Upland Borough Residents

Sponsored by

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Here are several simple, familiar year round yard care practices that encourage the absorption of rainfall and water runoff into the soil in residential landscapes. These actions benefit your community by preventing flooding, soil erosion and polluted runoff that threaten our streams, drinking water and ecosystems. We hope that you enjoy this month to month planner.

January:

Avoid or minimize the use of rock salt as a deicer on walks and driveways to prevent polluted runoff from snow and ice melt. Shovel snow and spread sand. You may also mix calcium magnesium acetate, magnesium chloride or nonchloride deicing products, which are less harmful to streams.

If possible, stay off your lawn when it is covered with ice or snow to avoid compaction of the grass plants. And consider planting native warm season grasses. Their roots are three to seven feet deep and enrich the soil and absorb many times the amount of rainwater than turf grass.

February:

Test your soil, as healthy soil grows healthy turf which can absorb more rain water. Cut down stalks of ornamental and native warm season grasses left over from the winter for bird habitat.

March:

Trees and shrubs help control excess water in the yard. Their foliage and bark surfaces reduce runoff and erosion by intercepting rainfall and their roots absorb the rainfall. Their leaf canopies also reduce the force of rain hitting the soil, preventing erosion. Where possible, plant a tall growing broad leaf tree such as an oak, maple or black gum. Large trees are great stormwater control and at maturity they intercept over 1,000 gallons of rainwater each year. Avoid pruning the tree crowns to allow full canopies to develop.

April:

Cut grass at 2 ½ to 3 inches tall. Mow often enough so that clippings are not longer than one third of the grass blade, so they can decompose easily into the soil. Spare your stream by avoiding spring fertilization and leave your clippings on your lawn. Grass clippings supply between 25% and 50% of nitrogen and phosphorus needs. Also, mulch beds trap and infiltrate more rainwater than lawn or bare soil. Spread out any excess mulch away from trees and shrubs, making sure the tree's flare is exposed and allowing it to decompose. Top off with a thin layer of fresh mulch, making sure the mulch is no deeper than three inches and does not touch the tree bark. Never spread fresh wood chips around trees or shrubs; their decomposition will harm plants.

May:

Replace some turf with mulched beds, a rain garden or a pocket meadow. Create new areas in the yard that will absorb roof water from downspouts, runoff from paved areas and puddles in compacted soil areas. Start a flower or vegetable patch, build a rain garden or establish a pocket meadow to absorb rainwater. Mulch all bare soil in planted beds or under trees and shrubs.

June:

Raise your mower height to three inches for summer months. Taller grass grows deeper roots, shades and protects the soil. Late May or early June is a good time to spread biological controls on your lawn or garden, such as beneficial nematodes to control Japanese beetle grubs. Avoid use of chemical

pesticides, if possible, they damage beneficial insects and soil structures. If weed problems develop, spot treat specific weed patches rather than treating the entire lawn or garden. Leave a minimum of three foot un-mowed edges along streams, ponds and drainage channels.

July:

Plants of all kinds help reduce stormwater runoff from residential properties. Their roots absorb water and break up and aerate the soil as they grow. Flowering native perennials will attract beneficial predators and pollinator birds, butterflies and other insects. Perennials also develop extensive root systems to hold and enrich the soil. Monitor plants for pests and control them with environmentally friendly applications or use plain water to avoid contaminating water runoff with chemicals that endanger the streams.

August:

Consider landscape modifications to help your yard retain excess rainwater and prevent runoff. Redirect all downspouts which drain onto paved surfaces and storm sewers to flow into a rain barrel, rain garden, mulched bed or grassy area, located downgrade from your house. Attend a rain barrel workshop. Most workshops are free or may charge a small amount for supplies. Minimize impervious surfaces such as asphalt and concrete on walks, patios and driveways around your property. Replace them with gravel or pervious blocks or pavers that allow rain and excess water runoff to soak into the soil.

September:

Labor Day signals the best time of the year to renovate your lawn. Slow released fertilizers are less water soluble and therefore less polluting to streams. Less compacted soils absorb more rainwater. Over seed a closely mowed lawn with a fine grass seed mixture and spread a slow acting organic fertilizer.

October:

Fall is the best time for planting more trees and shrubs. Consider volunteering to plant trees in your community. Leave faded blossoms on perennials to mature into seed heads to support birds and other wildlife over the winter. Spread lime if a soil test indicates that the soil is too acidic for turf grass.

November:

Start a compost pile with fallen leaves. Mix non-meat kitchen scraps or other greens organic matter. A compost can be used next year to condition your soil so that it can absorb more rain water. You may also consider purchasing a compost bin. Mow the last light leaves with a mulching mower and leave the fragments in the lawn as mulch for grass plants. Fertilize late fall with a slow release organic fertilizer to encourage root development over the winter months.

December:

Take a well earned break from yard work. Disconnect hoses from your rain barrel and store hoes to avoid damage from freezing. As the wintry mix of snow and rain events come along, monitor the melt runoff and see where to make more improvements next year. Your community will benefit from reducing flooding, safer water, cleaner streams and a healthier environment.

Here are several interesting web sites that you may enjoy:

Upcoming Programs for Rain Barrel Classes:

www.crcwatersheds.org

Purchase a soil kit and testing results:

www.aasl.psu.edu

Learn how to make a rain garden:

www.crcwatersheds.org/resources/view/96

www.scottarboretum.org

Thank You.