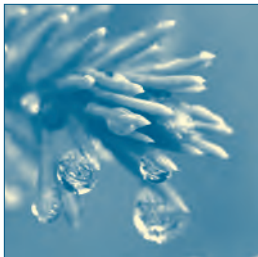


## Did You Know . . . .

*by Dan O'Connell, President, Appoquinimink River Association*



*Having your soil tested will help you to maintain a healthy lawn and garden.*



*Collecting rain water for outdoor watering and car washing can help to ease your summer water bills.*



*Dan O'Connell and his son, Liam, spend time together canoeing on Noxontown Pond in the Appoquinimink Watershed.*

On the first of April, my five-year old son and I spent about an hour paddling through the weeds at the south end of Noxontown Pond. We watched turtles on their basking logs, fishermen cast their lines in anticipation, and herons scan the shallows intently for a meal. As one of the founding members of the Appoquinimink River Association, I hope to persuade everyone living in this part of Delaware to look more closely at the way their lives are connected to the water. Of course, all of us spend a lot more time on the land that drains to the Appoquinimink River than we do on the river itself. Nevertheless, the things we do on this land, called the Appoquinimink watershed, inevitably influence its water.

Do you live in the Appoquinimink Watershed? Almost everyone who lives in Middletown, Odessa and Townsend and the surrounding areas of southern New Castle County lives on land that drains to the Appoquinimink River, and as so, lives in the Appoquinimink Watershed. When rain falls on your roof, your driveway, your lawn, your farm, or your favorite Middletown

shopping mall, that water eventually flows directly into the Appoquinimink River. This is the water we see from the bridge on Route 13 or Route 1 east of Middletown. On its way from your home to the river the water may change from being nearly pure to being polluted. The goal of the Appoquinimink River Association is to preserve, protect and enhance this water and the related natural resources of the Appoquinimink watershed.

For more than two years the Appoquinimink River Association has been hard at work. Benefiting from the amazing energy, commitment and expertise of our full-time Executive Director, Sara Wozniak, the River Association is successfully confronting the challenges of water pollution. Using hands-on volunteer action,

*continued on page 2*

**Appoquinimink  
River Association**

[www.apporiver.org](http://www.apporiver.org)



# Soil Testing

## The Most Important Backyard Tool You Should Be Using

Soil tests will help you develop and maintain a more productive soil by providing information about the fertility of your soil. Information from a soil test will help you select the proper fertilization program to obtain optimal growth of lawn, garden and ornamental plants. In addition, it will help protect water quality by making sure that you are not overfertilizing your backyard where fertilizer is just washed off by stormwater and sent into our rivers and streams through storm drains.



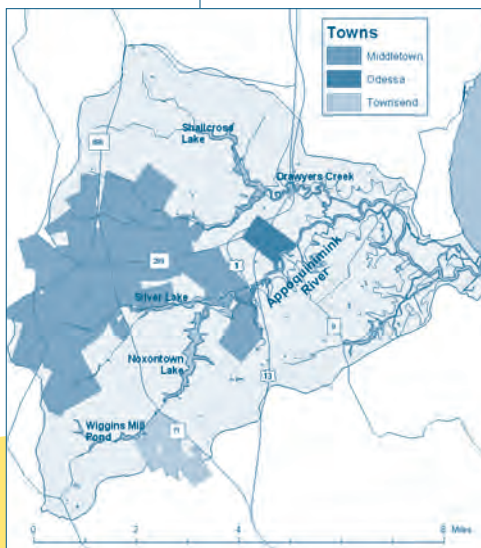
Soils can be tested any time during the year; however, be sure to sample well before planting or spring green-up. Generally fall is the best time to sample soils, because landscapes and gardens are usually dry enough to till when sampling. Soil sample kits can be purchased from the University of Delaware Soil Testing Program, Department of Plant and Soil Science at (302) 831-1392. Soil sample bags and other pertinent information are also available at the New Castle Cooperative Extension Office located at 910 S. Chapel St. in Newark.

## Did You Know

*Continued from page 1*

education, and cooperation with government, the River Association is producing a lasting impact.

Still, the challenge is great. Throughout this area farms and fields have given way to subdivisions and shopping malls. Yet, if we all act as good neighbors, these changes do not have to destroy our environment. There is much we can, and ought to do to protect the environment. It will require work, and, perhaps, some sacrifice. But, when I picture a bright spring afternoon many years in the future, I see my grandchildren peering from a quiet canoe at the same scene of minnows, frogs, turtles, and eagles that so delighted their father. When I think of this sort of future for the Appoquinimink River I have no doubt that many years of work will be well worth it. On behalf of the Appoquinimink River Association, I want to say hello and invite you to join us in this work.



Map of the Appoquinimink Watershed

# Rain Barrels

## Saving Water and Money

Forty percent of the water that we use in our lives is used for outdoor practices use such as watering gardens, lawns and other plants. Instead of wasting money by running your water all summer, why not save money and the environment at the same time!

One way to do this is by using a rain barrel. A rain barrel collects and stores rainwater from your rooftop to use later for things like lawn and garden watering. Water collected in a rain barrel would normally flow through your downspout, onto a paved surface, and eventually into a storm drain. By using the rain barrel you are reducing the amount of stormwater pollution that is reaching our storm drains which lead directly to our streams and rivers!

Only 1/4 of an inch of rooftop runoff will completely fill the typical rain barrel with water that contains no chlorine, lime or calcium which could be found in your home water supply. Also, because it tends to have fewer sediments and dissolved salts than the water coming out of your spigot, rain water is more ideal for practices such as watering indoor tropical plants like ferns and orchids, automobile washing and cleaning household windows. While the water from your rooftop is relatively clean, we do not recommend it for human consumption purposes. In addition, we recommend rain barrels with top side mesh screens to act as a barrier to insects or rooftop debris.

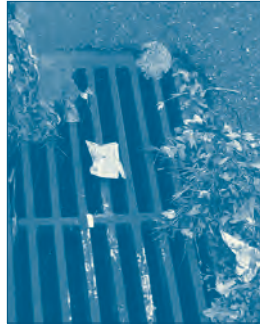


Rain barrels also reduce your demand for treated tap water which lowers your monthly bill as well as decreasing the burden on water treatment facilities and municipal drainage systems during storms. A rain barrel can save approximately 1,300 gallons of water during peak summer month. They are easy to build and install so check out your local garden stores or online websites to purchase one in time for the hot summer months!

# Stormwater Drains

## Where Do They Go?

Stormwater is water from rain or melting snow that does not quickly soak into the ground. Stormwater flows from rooftops, over paved areas and bare soil, and through sloped lawns and fields. As it flows, this runoff collects and transports soil, pet waste, pesticides, fertilizer, oil and grease, leaves, litter and other potential pollutants. You don't need a heavy rainstorm to send pollutants rushing toward streams, wetlands, lakes and oceans. A single garden hose can supply enough water.



Even houses that are not beside a creek or lake can contribute to problems. Storm drains and sewers are designed to move runoff from your neighborhood to the nearest body of water. Contrary to popular belief, storm sewers do not carry stormwater to wastewater treatment plants. They flow directly into our rivers and streams!

Stormwater pollution cannot be treated in the same way as water pollution from discharge pipes. Runoff pollution originates from multiple sources. Every street, parking lot, sidewalk, driveway, yard, and garden can potentially contribute to the problem. The issue can only be solved with everyone's help.

Here are some **EASY** things that you can do to help prevent the pollution of our rivers.

1. Never dump used oil, antifreeze or gasoline down a storm drain, in a ditch or on the ground. To help remind us of this DelDOT has placed storm drain markers throughout the watershed to remind you that only rain should be going down your storm drains. Look for markers throughout your community!
2. Wash your car on the lawn or, better yet, take it to a commercial car wash or spray booth that sends its dirty water to a wastewater treatment plant. Washing your car in the driveway creates runoff without the help of a rainstorm, and the dirty, soapy runoff drains directly into storm sewers, picking up oil and other pollutants as it goes.
3. Clean up after your pet. Take a plastic bag or pooper scooper along on your next walk! Then flush the waste down the toilet – the water from your toilet goes to either a sewage treatment plant or a septic system that removes pollutants before the water reaches a lake or river.
4. Aim downspouts onto grassy areas where water can soak into the ground. For roofs without gutters, plant grass, spread mulch, or use gravel under the drip line to prevent soil erosion and increase the ground's capacity to absorb water.



## We Would Like to Hear From You

### Do You Want to Continue to Hear from Us?

If you would like to continue to receive this newsletter and/or other information from us, please complete the form below and return it via fax to 302-834-0783 or mail to Appoquinimink River Association, PO Box 341, Middletown, DE 19709. Or you can send an e-mail to Sara Wozniak at [sara.wozniak@state.de.us](mailto:sara.wozniak@state.de.us) with the information.

I would like to receive the following:  River Watch Newsletter  All Association Mailings

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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# Just for Fun . . . . . WORD SEARCH

T N E M P O L E V E D P N F S  
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|---------------|------------|------------|
| Agriculture   | Fertilizer | Recharge   |
| Appoquinimink | Future     | River      |
| Aquifer       | Habitat    | Runoff     |
| Association   | Native     | Stormwater |
| Conservation  | Nitrogen   | Watershed  |
| Development   | Pesticide  | Wetland    |
| Downspout     | Phosphorus |            |
| Environment   | Pollution  |            |

After you find all the words above, write the letters that were not used in the spaces below to reveal a hidden message!

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