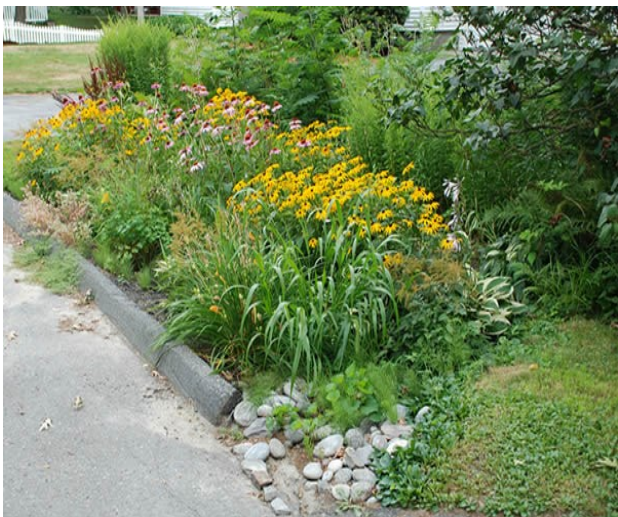


WHY SHRINK MY LAWN???

In urban and suburban areas, lawns can be a significant contributor to nonpoint source pollution. Compacted soils, short-rooted turf grass and excessive use of fertilizers and other lawn care chemicals cause lawns to generate increased amounts of runoff, nutrients, pesticides and herbicides, all of which negatively impact the health of aquatic systems.



“Shrinking your lawn” is as easy as replacing portions of turf, traditionally managed lawn area with native trees, shrubs, wildflowers and/or grasses. The negative impact of lawns on water quality is also reduced. Likewise, stop the use of phosphorus fertilizers for your lawn care, create a rain garden and make sure that your septic system is maintained properly.

Do you know . . .

The difference between a storm drain and a sewer? Storm drains collect water from outside our homes and businesses and carry it, untreated, directly to streams and rivers that ends up in Lake Erie. Sewers collect water from inside homes and businesses and carry it to treatment plants, where it is cleaned before it reaches streams and rivers.

So remember, only rain should go into storm drains, not trash, oil, or other pollutants.

HERBICIDES AND MICROCYSTIN

Microcystin is a toxin produced by blooms of freshwater algae, which are a vast and growing problem in Lake Erie—OUR drinking water source. Microcystin can cause nausea, vomiting and liver damage if ingested, and it has been known to kill dogs and livestock that drink contaminated water. Skin contact with the toxin can also cause irritation and rashes.

In 2014, a “Do not Drink” advisory was issued spanning three counties in Ohio and one in Michigan, leaving more than approximately 500,000 people in the Toledo area without drinking water.



Scientific evidence suggests particular dissolved reactive phosphorus (from fertilizer) promotes Microcystin growth. Lawn maintenance may use inorganic fertilizers, synthetic pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides, which harms the environment.

The United States Environmental Protective Agency has estimated nearly **70,000,000 pounds** of active pesticide ingredients are used on suburban lawns each year in the United States. It has also been estimated that more herbicides are applied per acre of lawn than are used by most farmers to grow crops.

* The EPA estimates that the total amount of residential lawn in the US covers about 40 million acres making turf grass the nations largest irrigated crop with no food to show for it.

THE BENEFITSTO “SHRINKING YOUR LAWN”

There are many benefits to “SHRINKING YOUR LAWN” whether practiced in place of or in addition to traditional landscaping.

- ◆ **Low Maintenance** -Native plants evolved to grow in local conditions and predictable sizes.
- ◆ **Public Health** -Traditional landscaping uses large amounts of synthetic pesticides and fertilizers, some of which are suspected carcinogens. During rains, these chemicals often run off into public water supplies.
- ◆ **Saves you Money** -The cost of maintaining native landscaping is dramatically less than that of a traditional landscape because it essentially takes care of itself saving you time - *and how valuable is your time?*
- ◆ **Water** -According to the EPA, the average American family uses 320 gallons of water per day, about 30 percent of which is devoted to outdoor uses. More than half of that outdoor water is used for watering lawns and gardens.
It also costs you - on your water bill.



- ◆ **Song Birds** - A National Audubon Society report called "Common Birds in Decline," shows that some widespread species thought to have been secure have decreased in number as much as 80 percent since 1967, and the 19 others reportedly have lost half of their populations. The loss is primarily due to habitat loss and pesticide use. The same pesticides accused of causing massive declines in the honeybee populations too.
- ◆ **Enhances Livability** - An ecologically functional landscape offers so much more than a sterile, static landscape. It is cleaner, quieter and healthier.

MAKE “EXPLODING” SEED BALLS

- 1/2 oz. native wildflower seeds
- 3 1/2 oz. dry, organic potting soil
- 1 1/2 oz. dry clay (powdered red pottery clay is best)
- Water
- A mixing bowl
- A cookie sheet for drying the seed balls
- Wax paper

Here's what to do:

1. Line cookie sheet with wax paper.
2. Mix seeds and potting soil together.
3. Add dry clay and mix again.
4. Slowly add water while still mixing the seeds, potting soil, and water into a well-blended paste.
5. When you're able to form a ball of the blended material without it falling apart, you are ready to stop mixing.
6. Mold the mixture into small (~1 inch diameter) balls and place cookie sheet or tray with wax paper.
7. Allow balls to dry in the sun for at least one day.

Now What?

Select a sunny spot in your yard and throw out the seed balls. They will lie dormant (sleeping) until the right amount of rain falls. The rain starts the germination of the seeds and soon your yard will “explode” with flowers!



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Public Involvement Public Education
Educating the public on our impact on Lake Erie