

Leaves need left out of the storm pipes

October 2020

Autumn brings with it many changes, but none may be more noticeable than when the leaves of deciduous trees change color and begin to pile up in our lawns. The beauty of fall soon becomes a harsh reality once you realize something must be done with this newfound carpet covering the grass, sidewalks and landscaping. You may choose to rake them to an out of the way area to compost, bag them up in lawn waste bags for trash service collection or, ideally, mulch them up with a mower and allow their nutrients to be reincorporated back into the soil.

Whichever method you prefer, the most important part of managing this annual abundance of organic material is to keep it out of the catch basins, curb inlets and pipes that make up the village's storm sewer infrastructure. Leaves can become compacted and form a dense, watertight barrier that prevents stormwater from entering drains along roads and in yards or form immovable clogs inside the pipes. Either situation can lead to backups and flooding that can damage personal property, impact transportation along with other headaches. So, as falling leaves signal the changing of the season, do your part to keep our storm sewer system functioning and keep the leaves out of the drains and pipes.

Water quality wisdom: Winter edition

As winter approaches and our sidewalks, driveways and roads become periodically snow or ice covered, many of us turn to spreading salt or commercial ice melt products to clear the slippery surfaces. Knowing what products to use, when to use them, and how much to apply are all important in reducing not only your expenses, but also any adverse effects on water quality when the product enters the stormwater runoff.

Be sure to use only salt designed for ice melting purposes or safe commercial alternatives as some contain ingredients that are harmful to pets and wildlife or may cause damage to concrete and vehicles that contact it. Apply ice melt only in the right conditions – most salt and commercial products are not effective for dealing with heavy snowfall or buildup and are best applied after removing as much snow and ice as possible.

Lastly, apply only the minimum needed. This will reduce any negative impacts to the environment and can also save you a significant amount of money over the course of the winter season. Just remember, every little bit helps, and everyone has a stake in the health of our watershed.

“Nuisance Geese in the Neighborhood”

As with any animal, Canada geese have two primary habitat requirements: a ready supply of food and a safe place to relax, recover, and reproduce. The preferred food source for geese is dense, green vegetation and their ideal resting and nesting spots are permanent bodies of water. If these sites have open surroundings with a good view of any threats, even better. If you take a look around our community, it won't take long to discover why so many geese have decided to call it home. Retention basins scattered throughout home developments, along with the many private ponds dotting more rural lots, provide an aquatic safe haven while the lush lawns and nearby agricultural fields provide an unlimited smorgasbord fit for grazing.

Munching on grass comes an equal amount of waste out the other end. Goose feces can accumulate rapidly, and since many of their feeding areas are in places frequently used by people it can create quite unpleasant experiences. Beyond the mess, goose feces can also contain an assortment of pathogens such as *Coliform* bacteria including *E. coli* which can cause illness to exposed humans. The nutrients contained within the droppings can also produce harmful algal blooms and other detrimental effects on ponds and lakes they inhabit. And as you think about that please remember to Pick-Up-Poop from our yards as it contributes to high levels of *E. Coli* as well.

Though Canada geese are protected by the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act, there are some permitted actions for dealing with nuisance geese that may be causing conflicts in your neighborhood. For more information on nuisance goose control, contact the Ohio Division of Wildlife at 1-800-WILDLIFE or Tommy Springer, Wildlife Specialist at the Fairfield Soil and Water Conservation District at 740-653-8154.

Fertilizer facts

April 2021

With spring right around the corner, the grass will be waking up and many of us will be looking to restart our lawncare regime that consists of regular mowing and may include one or more fertilizer applications throughout the year. As more information has become available on the potential negative impacts excessive fertilizer can have on water quality, there are a few steps you can take to minimize any unintended side effects from your efforts to keep your lawn lush and healthy.

- Fertilizer that ends up on impermeable surfaces adjacent to the lawn such as driveways, sidewalks and streets should be swept or blown back into the turfed areas where it can be absorbed into the soil and not washed into storm drains or mixed with other surface water.
- Fertilizer is calculated as a mixture of three main elements: Nitrogen (N), Phosphorus (P), and Potassium (K) and are listed by ratio on fertilizer bags in the format of N-P-K. Choosing a fertilizer low or free of phosphorus will reduce the impacts to water quality since this element is most commonly associated with harmful algal blooms and excessive aquatic weed growth.
- Avoid applying fertilizer immediately prior to a forecasted heavy rain event that may wash undissolved pelletized fertilizer off the intended site. Preferred conditions are dry to moderately moist soil followed by a light watering by hose or sprinkler to help start the absorption process.
- Getting a soil test to determine what type and how much (if any) fertilizer your lawn needs is an additional step that will save yourself time and money and further help prevent adverse environmental effects.