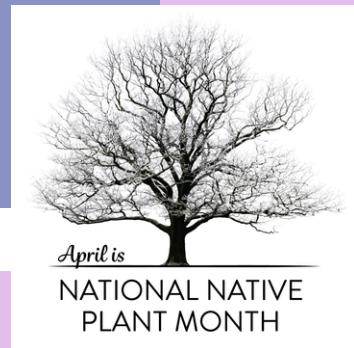


SWMD News

April 2024



Conservation Corner

Native trees provide habitat for native wildlife, including pollinators, absorb tons of carbon dioxide and gallons of stormwater, and can live 1,000 years. However, they won't survive if they are smothered by "volcano mulching!"

Keep mulch at least 6 inches from the trunk.

Mulching close to the truck will girdle the roots and allow bacteria, fungi, and insects to penetrate the bark and damage the tree.

For more information about specific native trees you can add to your yard, please contact me.



Greetings!

Happy Spring! It finally feels like the season of rebirth in nature. Spring wildflowers are popping through the forest floor, and the birds are starting to come back to nesting territories.

April is National Native Plant Month and a great time to remember the SSWCD stormwater theme of 2024: Backyard Conservation, with the tagline ["It's Not Hard to Have a Healthy Yard!"](#)

If your community would like free native seeds for your residents, please let me know!

Consider inviting Summit SWCD to one of your events, or schedule us to speak at community or local organization meetings to discuss ways people can implement small changes to make their yard a little healthier.

A reminder that the SWMD Grant application is still available. **The application deadline is April 30!** Please spread the word about this wonderful opportunity! For more information and the application, please contact me.

Natalie Schroder, Outreach Coordinator

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2024 Big Tree Contest Announcement

Summit SWCD will be sponsoring a Big Tree Contest in 2024. The American sycamore (*Platanus occidentalis*) has been chosen as the tree for this year!

American sycamore trees are easily identified by their height and distinct white bark. Also known as sycamore or American planetree, this tree easily reaches heights of 80 feet tall and 60 feet wide but can grow much larger.

Participants will fill out the nomination form to submit a nomination for a tree they believe might be the largest in the county. Qualified personnel will measure the trees to determine the winner. In addition to size information, the Summit SWCD will look at the ability of the tree to capture storm water.



Trees are wonderful reservoirs for storing rainwater. For example: one American sycamore with a diameter of 45 inches can absorb as much as 7,538 gallons of stormwater runoff each year! Imagine how much stormwater can be absorbed over the lifetime of that tree. Every tree that you see has the potential to reduce stormwater quantity and improve stormwater quality by filtering out pollutants.

To receive more information about the Big Tree Contest and the Nomination Form, contact me at the information provided on pg. 1.

Upcoming Library Partnership Programs



Summit SWCD is partnering with the Portage Lakes and the Springfield-Lakemore Branches of the Akron-Summit County Public Library to bring new conservation programming to your communities!

A “Shore”-fire Way to Understanding Water Quality

Springfield-Lakemore Branch:
April 2, 6 – 7 p.m.

Portage Lake Branch:
April 15, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Absorb a wealth of knowledge about water quality and its importance to society and the natural world! Gain insight into the many aspects of everyday life and nature that affect water quality and learn how you can volunteer with Summit Soil and Water Conservation District's Volunteer Stream Monitoring Program!

Interested attendees are encouraged to bring a half cup of soil from their backyard for a testing activity! Attendees will also leave the event with a personal water quality testing kit to conduct further study!



What's the Rumbling with Rain Gardens?

Springfield-Lakemore Branch:
May 7, 6 – 7 p.m.

Stop in and learn about rain gardens from Summit Soil & Water Conservation District. Make your own seed balls or take a kit home with you. Rain gardens are an attractive landscape feature that can be planted in your yard to help capture rainwater runoff. Gather information about this cost effective and beautiful way to improve your yard and surrounding environment.

Portage Lake Branch:
May 13, 6:30 – 7:30 p.m.

Enjoy a talk about the ideas behind raingardens and their influence on the environment and your own backyard! With a bit of planning and care, your raingarden will improve water quality and provide habitat benefits for pollinators and other wildlife for many years to come. Attendees will leave the event with their own personal seed mix to start planning and planting their own raingarden!