

Conservation News

Stark Soil and Water Conservation District

<u>January-March, 2025</u> <u>Inside this issue:</u>	75th Anniversary Announcement	<u>Board of Supervisors</u>
75th Anniversary 1	<p>As 2024 passes us like a brief memory, 2025 ushers in another year of growth and opportunity. This year the Stark Soil and Water Conservation District will officially celebrate its 75th Anniversary. Established in 1950, the district has been here watching as things have definitely changed in Stark County.</p> <p>In 1950 you could buy a brand-new Studebaker Champion, 2-door Custom sedan for the ripe old price of \$1,519.74. The local IGA was having sales on pork picnic shoulders for .49 cents a pound and 16 ounces of bacon and 10 lbs. of new potatoes would cost you less than 50 cents each. Citizen's savings and loan was offering 2% interest on all deposits. Star Mills phone number was 115-688. It was the Dawn of the Cold War and Sam Walton opened his first Walmart store.</p> <p>Though Stark County's population may have grown from 282,000 in 1950 to the current 372,700 today, we have also grown with the times but never forgotten our conservation mission:</p> <p>We are dedicated to conserving our natural resources by educating, guiding and assisting the citizens of Stark County.</p> <p>I encourage you to check out our website and take advantage of some of the programs that we offer. Our spring tree and fish sale is in full swing and offer a great variety of species that will not only enhance your property but attract birds and other wildlife. If you haven't already done so, like us on our Facebook page and keep a close eye on our website for more upcoming tidbits on our growth over the last 75 years.</p> <p>Have a great winter.</p>	<p>Andy Wentling Board Chair</p> <p>Anne Wolfe Vice Chair</p> <p>Rodney Campbell Fiscal Agent</p> <p>Rick Horner Secretary</p> <p>Natalie Hammer Member</p>
H2Obio in Stark 2		<p><u>District Staff</u></p> <p>Dan Kunz District Program Administrator</p> <p>Bryan Weyant Natural Resources and Drainage Technician</p> <p>Julie Berbari Storm Water Specialist</p> <p>Todd Clark Stormwater Inspector</p> <p>Tim Dietz Stormwater Inspector</p>
Keystone Corner 2		<p><u>NRCS Staff</u></p> <p>Lynette Harmon District Conservationist</p> <p>Jay Jordan Natural Resource Specialist</p> <p>Jon Reedstrom Resource Soil Scientist</p> <p>Jim Maple ACES</p>
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Stark Soil and Water Conservation District's
75th Anniversary
 Celebrating 75 Years of Conservation

H2Ohio in Stark County

Stark County was included in the Statewide Expansion of H2Ohio last year.

The Statewide Expansion offers incentive payments to farmers for the development of nutrient management plans. These plans use your soil test data, crop rotation information, and planned nutrient applications to help you save money on fertilizer and maximize crop yields. These plans are based on Tri-State Fertilizer Recommendations and the NRCS 590 standard to promote maximum nutrient uptake by your crops, ultimately leading to less nutrients entering waterways.

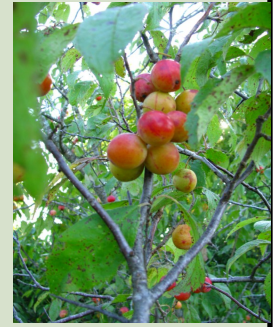
In the first round, 853 acres of farmland were enrolled in Stark County, and we have a goal of enrolling 5,000 acres in the future. A sign up period for the next round of applications is TBD. Please contact Stark SWCD for more information on H2Ohio and best management practices for nutrient management.

H2Ohio

Keystone Corner:

American Plum

(*Prunus Americana*)



With fragrant spring blooms and delicious fruit, this old-field mast producer is a heavy hitter when it comes to wildlife value.

A shrub or small tree, American Plum grows to 15'-20' and is renowned for its thicket forming habits. Small, 1" fruits ripen in August-September and offer an excellent late summer food source. The fruit is also edible for humans and is sought after for its use in jam and jelly. Native insects including many pollinating species feed on all parts of the American Plum. Deer use plum thickets for browse, security, and fawning cover. Turkeys and other ground nesting birds use plum thickets for nesting, brooding, and rearing. Birds are attracted to the plethora of insects during the summer, and the provided thermal cover can mean life versus death in the winter. American Plum grows well in full sun or partial shade, and prefers medium wet to medium dry soils. To maximize habitat value, plant American Plum alongside other species that are valuable to wildlife such as Redosier Dogwood, Black Chokeberry, and Hawthorne.

Native Plants for Winter Beauty

From Left to Right:

Winterberry, Redosier Dogwood, and American Holly



Prune Trees at the Proper Time to Prevent Disease

Pruning trees in late fall into the winter reduces chances of disease transmission and maximizes wound closure in the following growing season. Tree wounds release chemicals and hormones that disease spreading insects are attracted to.



For example, open wounds on oaks can attract picnic beetles that spread the deadly Oak Wilt fungus, and open wounds on elms can attract bark beetles that harbor Dutch Elm Disease fungus. Prevent the spread of these fatal diseases by taking care to prune your trees during dormancy!

Survey: *What topics are you interested in?*

Your feedback is appreciated. Please fill out and return with your tree/fish order.

- Wildlife Forestry Soil Health Nutrient Management Cover Crops Stormwater Drainage
- Wetlands and Rivers Water Quality Pond Management Urban Conservation Pollinators
- Warm Season Grasses Rain Gardens Rain Barrels Other _____

Stark SWCD 2025 Fish Sale

Name _____ Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip _____ Phone: _____

Order Deadline 3/24/2025. Make Payments to Stark SWCD, 2650 Richville Dr. SE, Ste. 100, Massillon, OH 44646.

For Office Use Only Cash/Check # _____ Receipt # _____ SWCD Initials _____ Date _____

Order pick up will be on Thursday, April 3rd, on the road entering our office at 2650 Richville Dr. SE, Massillon, OH 44646. You will need to bring enough containers to hold the purchased fish. Five-gallon buckets work well. Each container must have an unscented poly liner (30 gallon trash bag). **THE BAGS ARE NECESSARY TO HOLD OXYGEN TO KEEP THE FISH ALIVE DURING TRANSPORT.** Each container shall be filled with water from your pond, about 1/3 full. General rule of thumb is to bring one container per 100 small fish, one container per 1,000 minnows, and one container per 4-5 amurs or koi. Any questions please call our office at 330-451-7644.

Species	Size	Price	Order Qty.	Total
Largemouth Bass	2" - 3"	\$1.40		
Bluegill	2" - 4"	\$1.10		
Channel Catfish	4" - 5"	\$0.90		
Hybrid Bluegill	2" - 4"	\$1.10		
Red Ear Shellcracker	2" - 4"	\$1.10		
Fathead Minnows	1" - 3"	\$0.09		
Japanese Koi	5" - 7"	\$14.00		
White Amur	8" - 10"	\$17.00		
Perch	2" - 3"	\$1.10		
Black Crappie	2" - 4"	\$1.10		
Additional Items	Size	Price	Order Qty.	Total
Nature's Pond Conditioner	1 Gallon	\$95.00		
Nature's Pond Conditioner	5 Gallon	\$385.00		
Optimal Fish Food - Small Pellet	40 Pound Bag (40% Protein)	\$55.00		
Pond Management Book	n/a	\$25.00		

Please complete this form and ensure the form and payment are submitted to our office ASAP. Deadline is 3/24/2025.

Only exact cash or checks are accepted.

Our operating hours are Monday-Friday 8:00am - 4:00pm

Subtotal: _____

Sales Tax (6.5%) _____

GRAND TOTAL: _____

Stark SWCD 2025 Tree Sale

Name _____ Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip _____ Phone: _____

Order Deadline: 3/31/2025. Make Payments to Stark SWCD, 2650 Richville Dr. SE, Ste. 100, Massillon, OH 44646.
 Order pickup will be at the SWCD office on Monday, April 14th through Tuesday, April 15th, from 8:00am-6:00pm.

For Office Use Only Cash/Check # _____ Receipt # _____ SWCD Initials _____ Date _____

2025 Species	VALUE	Age	Size	Packet Price	# Packets	Total
Evergreens						
Canaan Fir <i>Abies balsamea phanerolepi</i>	BG	P+2	10-18"	5 for \$26		
Canadian Hemlock <i>Tsuga canadensis</i>	BGN	3.5" Pot	6-12"	2 for \$18		
Eastern Red Cedar <i>Juniperus virginiana</i>	BGN	2-0	12-15"	5 for \$24		
Eastern White Pine <i>Pinus strobus</i>	BGN	2-1	8-12"	25 for \$25		
Norway Spruce <i>Picea abies</i>	BG	2-0	18-24"	5 for \$12		
White Cedar <i>Thuja occidentalis</i>	BGN	2-0	12-15"	5 for \$12		
White Spruce <i>Picea glauca</i>	BG	2-1	10-18"	5 for \$12		
Deciduous						
Bald Cypress <i>Taxodium distichum</i>	BCNW	1-0	18-24"	5 for \$26		
Black Gum <i>Nyssa sylvatica</i>	BCNW	1-0	12-18"	5 for \$12		
Black Walnut <i>Juglans nigra</i>	BGEN	1-0	18-24"	5 for \$11		
Bitternut Hickory <i>Carya cordiformis</i>	BCFN	2-0	12-18"	5 for \$17		
Bur Oak <i>Quercus macrocarpa</i>	BFN	1-0	12-18"	5 for \$11		
Hackberry <i>Celtis occidentalis</i>	BCEN	1-0	12-18"	5 for \$11		
Sugar Maple <i>Acer saccharum</i>	BCN	2-0	18-24"	5 for \$15		
Swamp White Oak <i>Quercus bicolor</i>	BCNW	1-0	12-18"	5 for \$12		
Sweet Birch <i>Betula lenta</i>	BCFN	1-0	18-24"	5 for \$12		
Thornless Honeylocust <i>Gleditsia triacanthos</i>	BCFN	1-0	18-24"	5 for \$12		
Tulip Poplar <i>Liriodendron tulipifera</i>	BCFN	1-0	18-24"	5 for \$12		
White Oak <i>Quercus alba</i>	BFN	1-0	12-18"	5 for \$12		
Shrubs						
Black Elderberry <i>Sambucus canadensis</i>	BCEFNW	1-0	12-18"	5 for \$11		
Redosier Dogwood <i>Cornus sericea</i>	BCFNW	1-0	18-24"	5 for \$11		
Steeplebush <i>Spirea tomentosa</i>	BFNW	1-0	12-18"	5 for \$12		
Sweetshrub <i>Calycanthus florida</i>	BCFN	1-0	18-24"	5 for \$12		
Fruiting and Flowering Trees						
American Plum <i>Prunus americana</i>	BCEFN	1-0	12-18"	5 for \$11		
Downy Serviceberry <i>Amelanchier arborea</i>	BCEFN	1-0	12-18"	5 for \$12		
Eastern Redbud <i>Cercis canadensis</i>	BCFN	1-0	12-18"	5 for \$11		
Pawpaw <i>Asimina triloba</i>	BCEFN	2-0	18-24"	5 for \$20		
Pagoda Dogwood <i>Cornus alternifolia</i>	BCFN	1-0	12-18"	5 for \$12		
Sweetbay Magnolia <i>Magnolia virginiana</i>	BCEFN	2-0	18-24"	5 for \$16		

B-bird/wildlife value C-fall color E-edible F-flowering/fruiting G-evergreen N-native W-tolerates wet soils

Quantities are limited. Please complete this form and ensure the form and payment are submitted to our office ASAP. Deadline is 3/31/2025. Only exact cash or checks are accepted. Our operating hours are Monday-Friday 8:00am - 4:00pm

Subtotal: _____

Sales Tax (x6.5%) _____

GRAND TOTAL: _____

2025 Plant Descriptions

Canaan Fir – *Abies intermedii* - Local Christmas Tree growers largely agree that this is the best fir for most county sites. It is more tolerant than most firs of both wetter soil and drought conditions. The short, soft, fragrant needles maintain a bright green color year round. A true fir that grows 30-50 feet.

Canadian Hemlock – *Tsuga Canadensis* - Canadian (Eastern) Hemlock achieves its best growth in evenly moist, acidic, organic, rich, well-drained soils in partial shade to partial sun. Canadian Hemlock does not tolerate wet soils, nor prolonged drought. Strongly windswept areas and air polluted sites should be avoided. Canadian hemlock can reach a height of 70 feet with a 35 foot spread.

Eastern Red Cedar – *Juniperus virginiana* - This dense pyramidal native evergreen grows up to 40' and has a spread of 8-20'. The medium green needles are flat and scale-like. Exfoliating handsome grayish to reddish brown bark is considered part of its ornamental interest. It should grow in almost any type of soil. Due to its fast, dense growth, this tree is a good choice for an evergreen screen or hedge, space 4' apart.

Eastern White Pine – *Pinus strobes* - This is one of the fastest growing evergreens. Adaptable to many conditions, it has long, soft needles and grows 75-100 feet. Good tree for specimens, naturalizing, windbreak or dense screen. White pines are not picky about lighting conditions - growing in full sun to full shade conditions. White pines are well suited to poor soils and drier sites, but grow best on sandy or loamy, well drained, acidic soils.

Norway Spruce – *Picea abies* - This fast growing spruce reach 80 feet in height and is valuable as a windbreak and wildlife shelter. Norway Spruce prefers moist but well-drained, acidic soils that may be organic, sandy, or loamy. However, it is perhaps the most adaptable common evergreen tree to harsh conditions, including poor, clay, rocky, dry soils of acidic, neutral, or alkaline pH. Its should not be planted in wet soils, where it will quickly die. It grows in full to partial sun.

White Cedar - *Thuja occidentalis* - Also known as American Arborvitae, it can grow to 40 feet tall with a 10-15 foot spread. This tree has a pyramidal shape & makes an elegant hedge or wind break. Arborvitae prefers full sun, and needs a well-drained site, but will adapt to a variety of soil types. Arborvitae provide cover for wildlife.

White Spruce – *Picea glauca* - Growing up to 50', the stiff needles are light bluish-green, usually less than 1 inch in length. This spruce thrives in well drained or moist soil. It is unique because it can endure heat and drought better than others. Extremely hardy and will live where many other varieties could not survive.

Bald Cypress – *Taxodium distichum* - Grows 50-70 feet with a spread of 10-20 feet, this deciduous conifer has a stately pyramidal growth habit. Its bright green needles in spring turn to rich orange and pumpkin brown in autumn. It grows well in a wide range of soil conditions, but is a favorite for use in wet, swampy areas.

Black Gum – *Nyssa sylvatica* - A native tree of great ornamental and wildlife value that grows to 40 feet tall with a 30 foot spread. This handsome pyramidal tree has lustrous dark green leaves that turn a brilliant red in fall. Female trees produce a small blue fruit that birds relish. Grows on dry upland sites as well as wet sites, in full sun or part-shade.

Black Walnut – *Juglans nigra* - Growing to over 70 feet, it is one of the most highly valued of North American hardwoods for timber. The Black Walnut has compound leaves and produces large, rich, flavorful nuts. Walnut prefers moist, rich soils, but will tolerate a wide range of soils. For best nut production, space 30 feet apart to develop a full, well-branched top. It should start producing nuts in 8-10 years. For timber use, space 8-10 feet apart.

Bitternut Hickory - *Carya cordiformis* – Reaching a height of 70 ft, bitternut is prized for excellent timber quality. Although tolerant of a variety of soil conditions, it does seem to do best on drier sites. Salt tolerant. Full sun required in maturity.

Bur Oak – *Quercus macrocarpa* - Growing to a height of 75', this massive and majestic tree is found across Ohio. It is found in both continuously moist as well as very dry sites. It is one of the most picturesque of the Oaks of the Midwest, especially in winter. Its fiddle-shaped leathery leaves, huge fringed acorns, thick and sometimes corky twigs, and deeply ridged bark add to its bold texture. Acorns are quite large (sometimes 1 inch or more) and are a major food source for deer and other wildlife. Wood is heavy, hard, strong and durable.

Hackberry – *Celtis occidentalis* – Hackberry is a phenomenal tree choice due to its adaptability to a variety of soil types, temperatures, and it is tolerant of urban pollution and salt. This quick growing shade tree can reach heights of 70 ft x 70 ft wide. As indicated by the name, this tree produces small fruits that are attractive to birds and other wildlife.

Sugar Maple – *Acer saccharum* - The sugar maple sap is the source of the popular maple syrup produced in Ohio. Sugar Maple thrives when it is planted or transplanted into rich, moderately deep soils having even moisture coupled with good drainage. Growing up to 70' tall, its leaves have brilliant tones of yellow, orange and red in the fall.

Swamp White Oak – *Quercus bicolor* - Our Ohio native oak that has the greatest potential for early acorn production is the Swamp White Oak. And the good news is that the name is quite misleading. Swamp White Oak grows well on upland sites. They prefer an acid soil and full sun, and for a tree with "swamp" in their common name, they are surprisingly drought tolerant. This hardy native oak grows 50-60 feet in height. They will thrive when planted along streams & rivers; they are an excellent choice for wetland plantings. Its fall color is yellow-bronze. A great choice for attracting wildlife.

Sweet Birch – *Betula lenta* – Sometimes referred to as 'Cherry Birch' the bark of sweet birch is dark and peels off in squarish pieces, resembling the bark of black cherry tree.

Thornless Honeylocust - *Gleditsia cordiformis* is a member of the legume family and growing up to 40 ft tall and wide with an upright oval or rounded habit. This tree tolerates a variety of soil conditions including compaction, poor soils, drought, and flooding. It is also tolerant of heat, urban conditions, salt, and is resistant to damage by deer.

Tuliptree (Tulip Poplar) - *Liriodendron tulipifera* - The Tulip Poplar is a fast-growing, tall North American hardwood tree that can reach a height of over 150 feet! Hummingbirds and honey bees enjoy its nectar, while Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers enjoy its sap. Tulip Poplars produce seeds, which are favorites of Northern Cardinals. They have attractive spring flowers and great fall color!

White Oak - *Quercus alba* - This native beauty can reach a mature height of 80 feet. It is a broad, dense-headed tree with purple-red fall color. It is an excellent tree for wildlife, as it produces a good crop of acorns. It is also one of the most important hardwood timber trees in Ohio.

Black Elderberry - *Sambucus canadensis* - This is a vigorous, fast-growing native shrub: growing 6-8 feet high & wide. Its bluish-black berries can be used for making jelly, preserves, pies and wine. The berries are also a great food source for wildlife. The arching form of elderberry & fragrant, white flowers provide additional landscape value. Perfect shrub for wet sites, but elderberry is adaptable to many soil types. Fruiting is better in full sun site.

Redosier Dogwood - *Cornus sericea* - An open form, multi-stemmed shrub reaching heights of 7-10 ft. Bright red stems offer winter interest in any landscape. A great plant for field windbreaks, riparian plantings & urban settings. Fruit and twigs are used by wildlife. Very tolerant of pruning to maintain size and promote new growth, which offers the best red color. Very adaptable to a variety of soil and light conditions.

Steeplebush - *Spirea tomentosa* - famous for showy pink flowers, Steeplebush also features excellent foliage that turns bright reddish-gold in the fall. This native forms a colony of upright, slender wand-like plants and requires a moist setting

Sweet Shrub - *Calycanthus floridus* - Sweetshrub is an eastern U.S. native shrub with glossy, aromatic dark green foliage that reaches 6 to 9 feet in height. The flowers are a striking 2-inch fragrant, deep red to maroon color that last a month or more. Sweetshrub is very resistant to disease and pest problem and is highly adaptable to many soil types and grows in sun or shade.

American Plum - *Prunus americana* - Also known as wild plum, this native tree has white, pungently sweet blossoms in early spring before the foliage breaks bud. Its fruits are sweet when fully ripe, and make excellent jelly or jam due to their high pectin and acid content. It reaches 20-25 feet as an individual specimen and is highly adaptable to different soil conditions. Plant in full sun for optimal fruiting.

Downy Serviceberry - *Amelanchier arborea* This small native ornamental tree is an all-season beauty that will reach a height of 15-25 feet. White, fragrant flowers appear in early spring before the leaves emerge. The flowers give way to green berries that will turn red to dark purple in early summer. The edible berries are used in jams, jellies and pies. This serviceberry will grow in a wide range of soil types, with average to well drained soils, in full to partial sun.

Eastern Redbud - *Cercis canadensis* - A beautiful native tree that reaches 20-30 feet and has dark green heart shaped leaves. Appropriately named, the redbud has flowers that are reddish purple in bud and open to a rosy pink with purplish tinge in early spring. Redbud prefers deep, moist, organic, well-drained soils, but adapts to many less-than-favorable soils. It grows most rapidly and flowers most prolifically in full sun if adequate moisture is available during the heat of summer. A great hardy landscape addition!

Pagoda Dogwood - *Cornus alternifolia* - Striking in every season, Pagoda Dogwood is an extremely adaptable North American native tree. With distinct, horizontally tiered branching pattern, beautiful white spring flowers, blue summer fruit, and red fall colors, this tree provides beauty in every season making it a great choice for any yard. This dogwood grows to approximately 20ft x 20 ft. in full shade to full sun exposures.

Pawpaw - *Asimina triloba* - Back by popular demand! This unique native shrub is easily recognized by its large, tropical-looking foliage, and prized for its delicious banana-like fruits that mature in late summer. It can reach 8-20 feet tall and up to 15 feet wide. Its long leaves turn gold to brown in the fall. Two plants are recommended for pollination. They grow best in slightly acid (pH 5.5-7.0), deep, fertile, and well-drained soils. Good drainage is essential to success. They will grow in heavy soils but will not survive water-logged conditions.

Sweetbay Magnolia - *Magnolia virginiana* - Sweetbay Magnolia typically blooms a little later in the spring, which allows us northern dwellers a greater chance of actually seeing a magnolia bloom in our landscape. Sweetbay has a white, fragrant bloom that is smaller than most magnolia blooms. But this magnolia can take the cold, the heat, and the wet, heavy and poor quality soils many of us have to offer! The open growth habit of Sweetbay magnolia also lends interesting form to your landscape. In northern Ohio landscapes, this tree typically grows to about 25 feet. You'll love the large, clustered, orange fruits and so will the birds - this featured tree has four season interest!

Hybrid Chestnuts - Included with the purchase of each 'Hybrid Chestnut' packet is three hybrid chestnut seedlings and a one-year membership to Ohio Nut Growers. These seedlings are the result of three decades of plant breeding and combine pest and pathogen resistance from several chestnut species. Nut production has begun in field plantings in as little as three to five years in good site conditions.

Beat Cabin Fever with a Chainsaw - By Bryan Weyant

The short days and cold weather can drive many of us to hunker down inside, perhaps sit by the fireplace, and not leave the house unless it is absolutely necessary. For some of us, myself included, the cabin fever eventually sets in and the stir-craziness gets the best of us. We have to go find something to do. Firing up the chainsaw and cutting firewood is a fantastic excuse to get out of the house. If you heat with wood or use it to supplement, you know it requires a lot of work and preparation; cutting, splitting, and stacking so it can properly season. The sweat equity involved is rewarding when it keeps you and your family warm and reduces energy costs, and there's a certain ambiance about sitting by a fire with a cup of coffee after a long day's work. But whether you heat with wood or not, or if you own or manage forest ground, getting into the woods and running a chainsaw is not only good exercise, but it can be a valuable **conservation tool** as well.



While you are in the woods cutting firewood, be thinking about things you can do to *improve* the woods at the same time.

Activities like cutting grapevines, cutting and spraying bush invasives, crop tree/cull tree management (if appropriate,) are all great things you can be doing while you're out there. If you have a forest management plan already, then you know these activities are examples of what we refer to as "Timber Stand Improvement," or "TSI," and winter is a great time to do it. It is easier to maneuver in the woods this time of year, and it is also safer to cut trees down while the leaves are off as you can better see what is happening in the canopy. A little bit of TSI can go a long way. For example, with the removal of one poorly formed black cherry, you can release suppressed

desirable species, promote herbaceous growth in the understory, encourage oak regeneration, create brush piles for wildlife with the slash, AND get some firewood, all from removing one management tree. If your plan calls for a heavier thinning and you can't drop and harvest all the wood this year, you don't have to! Girdling trees is a great tool to kill a tree and leave it standing. This accomplishes the same benefits to wildlife and forest health as dropping a tree, but now you can keep the wood up off the ground until you're ready to process it. Girdling also creates vertical habitat for insects to colonize the bark, attracting birds such as Prothonotary and Blackburnian Warblers to your property. If you have a few trees close by that need to go, then creating a downed tree structure by strategically felling one on top of another is a wonderful structure for wildlife that can be easily created this time of year. Downed tree structures along with brush piles, when constructed properly, can provide wildlife with security from predators, nesting habitat, thermal cover, and much more. You can even get creative with it, and train a couple nearby grapevines to grow in amongst a brush pile for additional value! With TSI, we strongly encourage you to take care of any invasive species such as autumn olive or honeysuckle BEFORE doing any kind of cull tree removal or other overstory manipulation. Opening up the canopy without addressing invasive species first can cause those invasives to rapidly take over, degrading forest health and ultimately wildlife habitat.

Contact Stark SWCD to have one of our expert technicians walk your property with you, and discuss the many opportunities you have so that you can see your property through a different lens. Together with ODNR Divisions of Wildlife and Forestry, and USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, we provide technical planning and financial assistance to help set you and your property up for success. We wish you a safe and happy winter season, and hope you feel inspired to practice some winter time conservation this year!



2650 Richville Dr. SE., Suite 100
Massillon, Ohio 44646
330-451-7645 (SOIL)
www.starkswcd.org

Forget Winter, Think Spring! -By Todd Clark

If you're wondering if it is too soon to start thinking about fertilizing your lawn for the coming year, the good news is you're right!

The winter months are an ideal time to let your lawn *rest*. The cool season grasses favored in lawns throughout our area don't require fertilization over the winter months, nor is it a good time to apply soil amendments like lime. When cool season grasses are dormant they do not absorb the nutrients from fertilization. Instead these excess nutrients often find their way into our rivers and streams, deteriorating our waterways.

Cool season grasses – Kentucky bluegrass, perennial ryegrass, and turf-type fescues – typically begin growing in mid- to late-March, but don't flourish until later in April and May. March is the time you want to think about getting ready for a season of lawn care. Clean up remaining those leaves and blown down sticks during this time. Maybe even aerate the lawn if conditions permit. Then, as the ground temperatures creep above 50° F - usually somewhere between Easter Sunday and Tax Day - fertilize your lawn as you see signs of *active* growth. Actively growing grass readily absorbs the nutrients fertilization provides. Fertilizing your lawn at the right time not only makes for a healthy, more vibrant lawn; it also saves you unnecessary costs and limits unintended environmental impacts to our waterways.

So, take a break. Kick back with a cup of warm cocoa instead. Spring will be here soon enough. For now, let the lawn lie.

