

FAIRFIELD FEATURES



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The Fairfield Features is published by the Fairfield Soil & Water Conservation District
831 College Avenue, Suite B, Lancaster, Ohio 43130 (740) 653-8154

FAIRFIELD SWCD BOARD OF SUPERVISORS REORGANIZE

On January 11, 2024, the Fairfield SWCD Board of Supervisors selected the following officers for 2024: Doug Tenney - *Chair*, Gregg Pontius - *Vice-Chair*, Amber Hoisington - *Secretary*, Linda Claypool - *Treasurer/Fiscal Agent* and Cheyenne Erb - *Member*.

The regular monthly Board meetings will be held on the second Thursday of each month at 5 p.m. at the Fairfield County Ag Center. Anyone is welcome to attend the meetings. Please contact our office for information on any changes to the schedule.

THANKS DAVID!

We would like to thank David Ochs for his service on our Board of Supervisors. He served on our board for a 3-year term and held positions of Member and Treasurer-Fiscal Agent.

David is pictured with a Certificate of Appreciation from ODA and FSWCD for his service.



SUPERVISOR SWORN IN



Board member Gregg Pontius was sworn in by State Senator Tim Schaffer prior to the January 11, 2024, SWCD Board meeting. He began his second 3-year term on January 1.

Newly elected board member Cheyenne Erb was unable to attend the January Board meeting and will be sworn in at the next meeting.



Spring is almost here! It's time again for the Tree Seedling Sale. See inside for descriptions and order form.

WET BACKYARDS

Residents frequently contact Fairfield Soil and Water or their local municipality when rainfall results in ponding water, drainage problems, or inaccessible portions of property. Many times, corrective action can help address safety concerns, structural damage, or inappropriately maintained drainage infrastructure resulting from one or more of the following:

Gutters and Downspouts

Just a half inch of rain falling on a 1,000-square-foot roof will yield 300 gallons of water. Properly installed gutters should keep water away from your foundation, as wetness or erosion near walls and driplines can be damaging and cause shifting, settling, cracks, and leaks. Possible causes include clogged or undersized gutters, downspouts discharging too close to your foundation or failing tile if piped underground.

SOLUTION: Clean downspouts at least once a year, monitor for overflow or ponding water, and ensure the discharge point (including sump pump) is as far away as possible (at least 5'-6', but check your local code and comply) away from your foundation. Your runoff should not be a nuisance to your neighbors, or empty onto a sidewalk where ice forms in winter. If your home relies on a sump pump to keep water out of your basement, it may be advantageous to have a backup on standby or at least a secondary power source in case of a power outage.

Climate Change

Many long-time residents become concerned when observing standing water in areas where it had not ponded in the past. The last decade has been our wettest on record, and Ohio's springs continue to be warmer and wetter than average, with winters warming twice as fast as summers. With less ice and snowpack to retain water longer, runoff is immediate. However, Ohio still suffers drought. In 2019, 80% of Ohio was severely dry with the hottest September on record. Local rainfall data information can be found at <https://maps.cocorahs.org/>.

SOLUTION: Residents may conserve water for later summers with a rain barrel or cistern and should have underground drainage systems in place prior to wet seasons. Studies show that female mosquitoes prefer to lay eggs in water that collects or is stored in manmade containers. Breeding occurs within 10-14 days in stagnant water, including clogged gutters, open rain barrels, bird baths, buckets, etc. Practice regular cleaning and if necessary, use mosquito dunks. Local plumbing, zoning code, and HOA regulations should be checked.

Soil and Landscape Characteristics

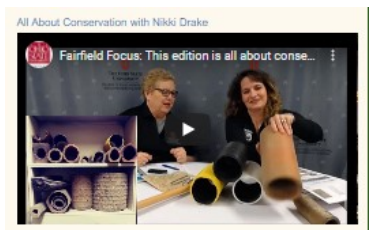
Some areas in Fairfield County have clay-heavy, poorly drained soils, and about 85% of the land in Ohio is affected by a seasonally high-water table. Newer subdivision lots generally do not have quality topsoil left after grading and construction. Instead, homeowners find themselves with heavy, hard subsoil as a poor foundation for grass establishment and other plantings that help slow and filter runoff. Your landscape modifications and those of your neighbors that include additions, mature shrubs, or soil movement tend to change drainage patterns, too, often directing water to foundation walls. Finally, those living near streams or ravines may clear plants and trees for an unobstructed view or easy access, but this threatens property and water quality with erosion, and intensifies runoff. Less trees result in less water removed from soil through the process of evaporation.

SOLUTION: Aeration, soil amendment, and mulching grass and fall leaves on lawns help build up oxygen-rich organic matter over time that retains more water and supports deep plant roots. Encouraging water-tolerant plants can sometimes be a resolution for periodic wet spots that do not support turfgrass. Grading or additional subsurface drainage may be necessary if elevations allow. Always ensure a positive grade away from your house's foundation, and practice stream stewardship where appropriate.

Subsurface Drainage

Much of our drainage can be subsurface tiles. If the plumbing in your house is broken, you get it fixed or deal with a leak. Subsurface drain tiles are the plumbing that keeps your house foundation and yard dry, so even though you don't see it, repairs or replacement should still be made. Surface inlets, such as catch basins or hickenbottom risers should be kept clear of debris. For more information, see:

- **What is Tile** document on our website at <https://fairfieldswcd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/What-is-tile.pdf>. It also explains how you can look through aerial imagery on Google Earth, if you are interested.
- Also, on our website www.fairfieldswcd.org homepage there is a video of our interview with OSU-Extension to discuss field tile. Tile discussion is around 4:30-10:00 and after 17:00.
- a blog at <https://fairfieldswcd.org/not-all-plumbing-is-inside/>
- a contractor list at <https://fairfieldswcd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/12/General-contractors-list.pdf>, if you are in need of a contractor. Certainly, you don't have to use one of them. It lists their contact info, what type of work they do and equipment. We offer no warranty expressed or implied for the contractors on the list.



WET BACKYARDS (continued)

Ohio Drainage Law

Water should enter and leave your property where it did prior to any construction activities. Changing the flow of water in a manner that causes damage to an upstream or downstream neighbor may result in legal liabilities of a civil matter. If neighbors can't amicably come to resolution of an issue, you can take the matter to court for a judge to make a ruling. More information is on our website at <https://fairfieldswcd.org/residential-resources/urban/>, scroll down to Ohio Drainage Laws and look through bullets: Ohio's Drainage Laws, Tile and Easements, and Water Rights & Reasonable Use.

Other Information

We have a Rural Land Ownership Guide at <https://fairfieldswcd.org/rural-land-ownership-guide/> that gives more details specific to Fairfield County, especially site selection. Keep in mind, Fairfield County has many areas of natural springs and artesian wells. Often, we hear someone wants to build a pond to alleviate flooding in their yard. We discourage this as a pond may compound the problem, you should fix the issue instead. Be sure to keep septic systems in good working order and the drainage area around it sufficient (Fairfield Dept. of Health regulates, for information go to <https://www.myfdh.org/Environmental-Division/FDH-Household-Sewage-Treatment-Systems.html>). Franklin Health Dept. may be your contact, if you are to the northwest.

What Can Fairfield Soil and Water Do?

There are no "drainage police", we don't have any authority to make someone correct a drainage issue. In addition to the above information, we can provide:

- topographic/soils map which shows the way the land falls and soil descriptions, you can also access soil maps and information from Web Soil Survey online <https://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/HomePage.htm>
- review of historic engineering plans and 20+ aerials we have dating back to 1930s, can also look at Google Earth (instructions on how you can use in the What is Tile document - link above).
- petition can be made to the county commissioners to create a tile or ditch project as a last resort, but unless the majority of neighbors affected agree to it, a project may not proceed.



WINTER AND SPRING POND MANAGEMENT TIPS

- Aquatic vegetation will continue to produce oxygen throughout the winter, even under ice, as long as sunlight can get through. Extended periods of snow-covered ice may lead to oxygen shortages and potential fish kills, but this can be reduced by safely removing the snow from portions (or all) of the pond's surface.
- During the winter, the water in the pond will go through a stratification process where the warmer water collects in a layer on the bottom of the pond with cooler water near the surface. In the spring this stratification mixes in what's called a turnover. Rapid turnovers, sometimes called pond "flips," are often caused by a heavy, warm rain event and may be detected when the water suddenly turns muddy from sediment being pulled upward off the pond bottom and suspended. In these cases, a sudden oxygen crash may occur resulting in a widespread fish kill, with larger fish, and fish species with higher dissolved oxygen requirements most at risk of suffering losses.
- Submerged vegetation and algae will begin new growth in early spring as water temperatures start climbing and days become longer. Physical removal of residual filamentous algae can begin as soon as surface ice melts, and proactive chemical treatment in early spring when water temperatures are 50-60F will help maintain control throughout the summer. Other aquatic plants can be addressed as they appear. If you have questions on aquatic plant ID or want guidance on treatment options, please contact Lauren Vires, Fairfield Soil and Water Conservation District Wildlife Specialist at (740) 415-3905.

2024 SEEDLING TREE SALE

NATIVE SHRUBS, SMALL TREES, FRUIT BEARING



Alligheny Serviceberry
 Mature Height: 15'–35'
 Mature Width: 15'–20'
 Growth Rate: M
 Light Required: S, P, SH
 Soil Moisture: D, M
 Soil pH: A

Comments/Uses: multi-trunk understory tree, showy white flowers that drop edible berries



Buttonbush
 Mature Height: 5'–12'
 Mature Width: 4'–15'
 Growth Rate: M
 Light Required: S
 Soil Moisture: W
 Soil pH: N

Comments/Uses: round shape, tolerates very wet soil, cluster white flowers that attract pollinators



Elderberry
 Mature Height: 6'–13'
 Mature Width: 5'–12'
 Growth Rate: F
 Light Required: S, P
 Soil Moisture: W
 Soil pH: A, N

Comments/Uses: dark edible berries, showy white flowers, attracts wildlife & birds



Heritage Red Raspberry
 Mature Height: 4'–5'
 Mature Width: 3'–4'
 Growth Rate: F
 Light Required: S
 Soil Moisture: M
 Soil pH: A, N

Comments/Uses: self-pollinating variety known to produce several crops, one in midsummer and a larger second in fall



Duke Blueberry
 Mature Height: 3'–5'
 Mature Width: 3'–4'
 Growth Rate: F
 Light Required: S
 Soil Moisture: M
 Soil pH: A

Comments/Uses: large, quarter-size berries that ripen in June, self-pollinating, recommended to plant two or more



Persimmons
 Mature Height: 40'–50'
 Mature Width: 25'–30'
 Growth Rate: M–S
 Light Required: S, P
 Soil Moisture: M, W
 Soil pH: N

Comments/Uses: edible fruit, fragrant white flowers, wildlife and pollinators



White Flowering Dogwood
 Mature Height: 20'–30'
 Mature Width: 20'–25'
 Growth Rate: M–S
 Light Required: S, P
 Soil Moisture: M
 Soil pH: A

Comments/Uses: beautiful white flowering tree, with scarlet red berries and leaves in fall



Winterberry
 Mature Height: 3'–12'
 Mature Width: 3'–12'
 Growth Rate: S–M
 Light Required: S, P, SH
 Soil Moisture: M, W
 Soil pH: A

Comments/Uses: round, male & female will produce showy red berries, not safe for human or pet consumption

NATIVE LARGE TREES



Burr Oak
 Mature Height: 60'–90'
 Mature Width: 40'–80'
 Growth Rate: S
 Light Required: S, P
 Soil Moisture: D, M
 Soil pH: A, N, B

Comments/Uses: syrup, timber, wildlife and pollinators



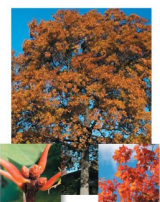
Butternut
 Mature Height: 40'–60'
 Mature Width: 30'–50'
 Growth Rate: S
 Light Required: S
 Soil Moisture: M
 Soil pH: N

Comments/Uses: wildlife habitat (bat roosting in flaking bark), and timber



Red Maple
 Mature Height: 40'–70'
 Mature Width: 30'–50'
 Growth Rate: M
 Light Required: S, P
 Soil Moisture: W
 Soil pH: A

Comments/Uses: lovely fall foliage, wildlife and timber



Red Oak
 Mature Height: 50'–60'
 Mature Width: 50'–60'
 Growth Rate: F
 Light Required: S
 Soil Moisture: D, M
 Soil pH: N

Comments/Uses: tolerates dry conditions, timber, and landscaping



River Birch
 Mature Height: 40'–70'
 Mature Width: 40'–60'
 Growth Rate: F
 Light Required: S, P
 Soil Moisture: M, W
 Soil pH: N

Comments/Uses: reputation as tough species, ornamental or street tree, thrives in moist soils, showy bark



Shagbark Hickory
 Mature Height: 75'–100'
 Mature Width: 40'–70'
 Growth Rate: M–S
 Light Required: S, P
 Soil Moisture: M
 Soil pH: A, N

Comments/Uses: wildlife, large tree at maturity, long-lived and offers deep shade

NATIVE LARGE CONIFER TREES



Tamarack
 Mature Height: 40'–80'
 Mature Width: 12'–20'
 Growth Rate: F
 Light Required: S, P
 Soil Moisture: M, W
 Soil pH: A

Comments/Uses: deciduous conifer with reddish spring cones, decay resistant, wildlife habitat



White Pine
 Mature Height: 60'–80'
 Mature Width: 20'–40'
 Growth Rate: F
 Light Required: S
 Soil Moisture: M
 Soil pH: A, N

Comments/Uses: timber, windbreak, wildlife

Get in touch with your roots and order your trees today. Trees can be ordered online through our partner's website, www.LickingSWCD.com

Growth Rate: F = fast, 12"+ per year, M = medium 6"–12" per year, S = slow 2"–6" per year
 Light Required: S = sun, P = part sun/shade, SH = shade
 Soil Moisture: D = dry, M = medium, W = wet
 Soil pH: A = acidic (6.5 or less), N = normal pH range (6.5–7.5), B = basic/alkaline (7.5+)

2024 SEEDLING TREE SALE ORDER FORM

Indicate quantity of saplings or packs in area provided for each variety.

Native Shrubs, Small and/or Fruit Tree Species	Sapling (2'-4')	Pack of 5 (12"-18")	Pack of 25 (12"-18")	Total # of Packets x price	
	\$12.00	\$15.00	\$45.00		
Allegheny Serviceberry					
Elderberry					
Persimmon					
Winterberry					
White Flowering Dogwood					
Buttonbush					
Heritage Red Raspberry		Root Cuttings 8-12"			
Duke Blueberry		Root Cuttings 10-16"			
Native Large Broadleaf Tree Species	Pack of 5 (12"-18")	Pack of 25 (6"-12")	Pack of 100 (6"-12")	Total # of Packets x price	
	\$15.00	\$40.00	\$110.00		
Shagbark Hickory			N/A		
River Birch					
Red Maple					
Butternut					
Bur Oak					
Red Oak					
Native Large Conifer Tree Species	Pack of 5 (12"-18")	Pack of 25 (6"-12")	Pack of 100 (6"-12")	Total # of Packets x price	
	\$15.00	\$35	\$80		
White Pine					
Tamarack					
Additional Items	Cost	Total # x price	Additional Items	Cost	Total # x price
Wildflower Seeds	\$5.00		Marking Flags	\$0.20	
Erosion Seed Mix	\$5.00		Dibble Bar	\$95.00	
Watering Rings	\$12.50		Geotextile	\$2.00/linear foot	
Marking Paint	\$9.00		Manage Pond Book	\$20.00	
Tree Tube/Stake	\$7.50				
**Starting in 2022 State Auditor requires Soil & Water to collect tax. Non-profits and farms must provide tax exempt form with order.			Subtotal:		
Order Deadline: Friday, March 15 Pick Up: Friday, April 19			Sales Tax** (6.75%)		
(Please print)			Complete Total:		

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Visit our partner online at www.lickingswcd.com for online ordering (online orders will be charged Licking County's tax rate of 7.25% regardless of which county you pick up in).

The online catalog does not allow the removal of tax, so if you are tax exempt, please use this printed order form and submit to Fairfield SWCD with tax exempt form.

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BENEFITS OF SOIL TESTING FOR GARDENS AND FLOWERBEDS

By Carrie Brown, Agriculture & Natural Resource Educator with OSU Extension;
and Lauren Vires, Wildlife & Education Specialist at Fairfield SWCD

Putting in the time and effort to cultivate a garden or flowerbed is hard work. The satisfaction of eating that first juicy tomato or watching the pollinators buzz about your flowers can make it all worth it. One of the easiest things you can do to improve your efforts is to test the soil you're working with.

The foundation of any garden or flowerbed is the soil in which it grows. Soil provides essential nutrients and the environment where roots can take hold and find water. A soil test can provide information on the availability of essential nutrients such as phosphorus (P), potassium (K), calcium (Ca), magnesium (Mg), zinc (Zn) and for an additional fee it can give you the status of other trace nutrients such as iron (Fe), manganese (Mn), and copper (Cu). These nutrients are important for the plant's growth, development, productivity, creation of cell structures, energy storage, ability to photosynthesize, and more.

Soil test results will also give you insights on the soil's pH. Soil pH affects the availability of nutrients. For example, below a pH level of 6.0 some nutrients become more unavailable such as phosphorus (P), and some become more available such as iron (Fe). Plants also have a certain pH range in which they can grow the most successfully. Many flower and garden produce species grow best in soils with a pH range of 6.1 to 6.9, whereas something like **blueberries** require more acidic soils in order to thrive.

Overall, the information you gain from a soil test can help you make informed decisions about managing your garden or flowerbed. Using your soil test results to develop a targeted approach to apply fertilizer that fits your needs without being wasteful can save you money and prevent excess nutrients from washing away and entering our waterways. Knowing your soil's pH can help guide your decision on which plants may be a best fit for your plot. If you already have plants growing, and they begin to show signs of health issues, a soil test can help in the diagnosis of the problem and solution.

While soil testing can be done in any season when the soil is workable, you should allow plenty of time to receive and evaluate your soil test results. Actions taken to improve your soil fertility may have seasonality. While fall is the best time of the year to apply lime to raise soil pH, spring is the preferred time of the year for sulfur application to lower pH. Soil should be sampled to root depth, which typically means 5 to 8 inches for trees, shrubs, flowerbeds and vegetable gardens, and 3 to 4 inches for lawns. Organic matter on top of the soil should not be included in soil test samples. Samples can be taken with a specialized tool called a soil probe or something as simple as a soil knife or garden spade. You should strive to collect multiple samples in order to represent the entire area you are evaluating. These samples are then air-dried, crushed, and mixed together. A small amount of soil, about 1 pint in volume, is sent as a representative sample to the testing lab. Separate soil tests can be pulled when evaluating different types of plant cultivation (i.e., turfgrass, vegetable gardens, trees/shrubs, etc.) or in areas you suspect will require different fertility treatments.

Soil bags, input forms, and step-by-step instructions are available through your local Fairfield County OSU Extension office to assist those interested in having their soil analyzed. A 'basic' analysis, which includes discovery of P, K, Ca, Mg, Zn, pH and buffer pH, costs \$6.50 per sample (which includes the bag and laboratory analysis) if you choose to package and mail your own samples from home. The Extension office can assume the responsibility for processing, postage and mailing the samples at the cost of \$16.70 per sample. Additional tests such as organic matter or trace elements are available for an extra fee. Results are typically received by the office within two weeks, and we will then reach out to you to review the findings and discuss recommendations based on your own gardening goals.

Interested in learning more? Contact Fairfield County OSU Extension at 740-653-5419 or email Carrie Brown at brown.2766@osu.edu.

SAVE THE DATE

The Fairfield SWCD, along with the Fairfield County Sheriff's Office, will be participating in the DEA National Rx Take Back Day (Drug Collection Event) on **Saturday, April 27th** from **10 a.m.—2 p.m.** at the Walnut Twp. Fire Department located at 2435 Blacklick-Eastern Road NE in Millersport, OH.

Please check our website at fairfieldswcd.org at a later date for more information.

HAVE AN ORPHAN GAS OR OIL WELL?

The ODNR Orphan Well Program was established in 1977 to plug abandoned oil and natural gas wells. Ohio's program is recognized as one of the most well-funded and organized in the nation. Proper plugging of orphan wells is necessary to protect public health and safety, conserve natural resources, and allow the efficient development of Ohio's oil and gas resources. General Questions or to report an orphan well, call (330) 308-0007 or email OrphanWellProgram@dnr.ohio.gov

FAIRFIELD SWCD COLLEGE SCHOLARSHIPS

The Fairfield SWCD will award up to three \$1,000 college scholarships for any graduating high school seniors that plan to study Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation, or Environmental Education. The scholarship can be used for the pursuit of two-year or four-year degree programs as well as a technical college. Applicants must be residents of Fairfield County and can be home-schooled. The applicant must have a minimum cumulative grade-point average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale at the time of application.

Applications for this scholarship can be acquired at the SWCD office or through the Fairfield SWCD website at fairfieldswcd.org/educational-services/scholarship. Along with the application, an official high school transcript, 400 word essay and two letters of recommendation are required. One recommendation needs to come from a teacher at the applicant's school; the other should be from a person in the local community (neither can be a relative). Eligible applicants will be required to interview to be eligible for the scholarship, with a decision made by the end of the current school year.

Scholarship funds will be distributed in two payments of \$500. The first payment will be issued once the recipient submits proof of full-time enrollment for the fall semester. The final payment will be issued after successfully completing the first semester of college and the submittal of grades to the SWCD office showing the recipient achieving at least a 2.5 GPA on a 4.0 scale. Checks will be made payable to the student and can be used for tuition, room and board, books, or other educational expenses. Deadline to apply is March 31st.

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To file a complaint, write the Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington D.C. 20250 or call 1-800-245-6340 (voice) or (202) 720-1127 (TDD). USDA is an equal employment opportunity employer.

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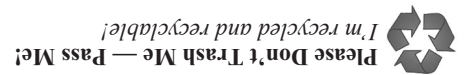
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