Homeowner Tips
Landscaping to save time and money
• Reduce use of pesticides and fertilizers. Applying more than what is recommended can harm your lawn, plants, pets, wildlife. The excess can wash into local streams, polluting our drinking water supplies.
• Replace lawn with ground covering plants. Reduce the need for mowing and maintenance while improving ground water filtration.
• Water your lawn less frequently. This encourages deep root growth and discourages weeds.
• Plant native vegetation. It requires less maintenance while supporting the local ecosystem.

Drainage Tips
• Reduce impervious surfaces. Consider using permeable materials such as paver, gravel or stonework instead of asphalt or cement.
• Disconnect downspouts from sewer lines, thus reducing sewer overflows to river and streams.
• Disperse drainage pathways. Creating a garden in a low area allows storm water to be absorbed.
• Trees and vegetation with deep roots improve groundwater infiltration and absorption by plants.
• Capture rain water from your downspout into a rain barrel or cistern. Use this water on your yard or garden, thus saving money on your water bill while recycling nature’s water.

Support efforts to protect streams, wetlands and the naturally vegetated areas around them.

Benefits to the homeowner and community
• Save time and money on lawn maintenance
• Reduce and protect properties from erosion
• Reduce sewer overflows
• Improve groundwater recharge
• Reduce flooding
• Reduce contaminants in drinking water supply
• Support native wildlife and ecosystem
• Protect and increase property values
• Protect your river and stream!

What you can do
Get involved with your local watershed group
• River and stream cleanups
• Tree plantings and restoration projects
• Stream quality monitoring
• Educational booths and events
• Backyard Conservation programs and practices
• The Lower Olentangy Watershed Action Plan
• Membership: Your support enables us to continue this work. Visit our website. Please join today!

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Ellie Nowels, Centipede Graphics
Franklin Soil & Water Conservation District
Ohio Department of Natural Resources
Ohio State University

Welcome to the Olentangy Watershed
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Welcome to the Olentangy Watershed
Your watershed, a special place

A Watershed is the land area that drains into a specific body of water such as a stream, river, lake or ocean.

The Olentangy River is 88.5 miles long and spans 5 counties including Franklin, Delaware, Marion, Morrow and Crawford. The lower Olentangy River is the last 32 mile stretch of the river, extending from the Delaware Dam to the Old Wilson Bridge Road. The river valley contains forested areas, steep shale banks, clear streams, deep ravines and exposed large spherical “ironstone” concretions of geologic interest.

Drinking Water Source
The Olentangy River provides drinking water for at least 50,000 residents along with some local hospitals, schools and industry.

Wildlife
The river and surrounding lands provide habitat for more than 188 species of birds, at least 14 species of living freshwater mussels and 54 varieties of fish, many of which are endangered, threatened or special interest species. Sports gamefish, including Smallmouth Bass, Largemouth Bass, Crappie, Bluegill and other varieties of Sunfish, can also be found in the river.

Recreation
Paddlers, hikers, cyclists, campers, fishers and bird watchers all take advantage of extensive recreational opportunities on the Olentangy. Parks, trail systems, and recreational areas are accessible throughout the river valley.

Your river, a valuable resource

The Scenic River
The Olentangy was designated a State Scenic River in 1973 because of its natural habitat and notably high water quality. Scenic River extends 22 miles from the Delaware Dam to the Old Wilson Bridge Road. The river valley contains forested areas, steep shale banks, clear streams, deep ravines and exposed large spherical “ironstone” concretions of geologic interest.

Quality: Storm water carries contaminants from our landscape to our river, including:
- Automotive chemicals
- Nutrients from fertilizers
- Sediments from construction sites
- Chemicals from home & garden use
- Bacteria from animal, septic and sanitary waste

Quantity: The rapid accumulation and large volume of storm water discharging to the river cause additional problems, such as:
- Increased flooding
- Sewage overflows
- Erosion of streambanks and property
- Inadequate recharge of groundwater supplies

Factors that contribute to storm water problems:
- Impervious surfaces and compacted soil
- Loss of wetlands, streamside trees and vegetation
- Street and storm drains that transport polluted stormwater directly to streams
- Stream alterations including straightening and culverts

Threats to your river

Water quality in the Olentangy River ranges from excellent to poor. Water quality problems exist due to stagnation behind low head dams, sanitary sewer overflows, home sewage leaks, and a multitude of problems associated with storm water runoff.

Storm water runoff causes special problems in urban landscapes where hard surfaces (roofs, parking lots, and pavement) prevent the rain water from soaking into the ground. Instead, the water flows through storm sewers to our rivers and streams, where it causes erosion, flooding, and contamination.

After the water in the Olentangy River flows to the Scioto, it travels south to the Ohio River, down the Mississippi and into the Gulf of Mexico, where many water quality problems are evident. We are part of the larger Mississippi watershed.