Help protect the Darby Creek. Join the Darby Creek Valley Association Today!

The Darby Creek Valley Association (DCVA) is dedicated to the protection and enhancement of all of the watershed's resources, including water, wildlife, historical sites and the floodplain. For more information on DCVA, its goals and history, please visit the website, **www.dcva.org.**

Please complete and mail to:
The Darby Creek Valley Association
P.O. Box 732
Drexel Hill, PA 19026

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____

Zip _____ Telephone _____

Municipality _____

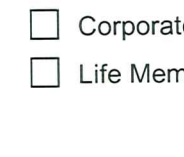
Email _____

Type of Membership

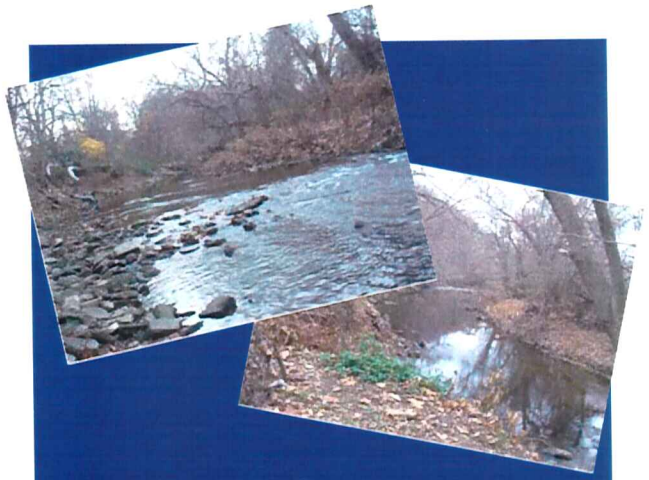
- ☐ Individual Member $25
- ☐ Family Member $35
- ☐ Senior Citizen/Student $10
- ☐ Nonprofit Groups $35
- ☐ Corporate/Municipal $50
- ☐ Life Member $250

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage Paid
Permit # 17
Drexel Hill, PA

Darby Creek Valley Association
P.O. Box 732
Drexel Hill, PA 19026



Look for upcoming workshops on creek friendly yard care
Visit www.dcva.org.



Darby Creek Watershed

Creek Friendly Lawn and Garden

Developed by the Darby Creek Valley Association

Creek Friendly Lawn and Garden

By making these simple changes in how you maintain your property, you can have a big impact on the health of the Darby Creek Watershed:

Darby Creek Watershed

Mow High and Use Less: Set the height of your mower to 3 inches as taller grass slows stormwater runoff and requires the use of less fertilizer and pesticides. Have your soil tested to learn which nutrients and pesticides your lawn needs so that you can save money on these chemicals and avoid adding chemicals to the creek that may increase growth of harmful algae. Read product labels to learn the correct amount for application and to determine which ones are harmful to fish, frogs, salamanders and other animals. Consider switching to all natural alternatives. Infrequent long watering encourages grass to develop deep, drought resistant roots.

Compost Yard Waste: Do not bag your lawn clippings or throw them in the creek. They will decompose on your lawn and serve as free fertilizer! Also, never put leaves in the creek. Both grass clipping and leaves from your lawn add excess nutrients to the creek when they break down.

Plant Natives: Native plants are adapted to our local climate and require less fertilizers and pesticides to thrive. They are also more drought tolerant and therefore require less watering. Consider replacing some of your lawn area with native vegetation including flowers, shrubs and trees. Lawn grasses are not native to this region and is therefore high maintenance requiring the application of fertilizers and pesticides.

Rainbarrels: Install a rain barrel to capture your roof runoff. This water can be used to water your plants.

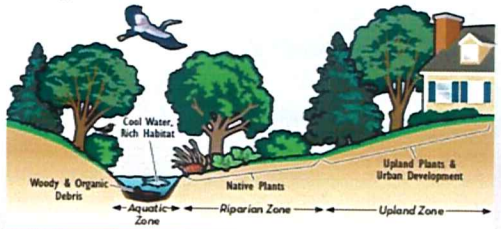
Rain Gardens: A Rain Garden is a depression on your property designed to catch and filter the water that runs off your roof, driveway, walkway, compacted lawn areas and other impervious surfaces. Rain Gardens can infiltrate 30% more water than lawn and capture and filter the first flush of stormwater that contains the most pollutants.

Photos courtesy of the Philadelphia Water Department

Healthy Versus Unhealthy Stream Habitat

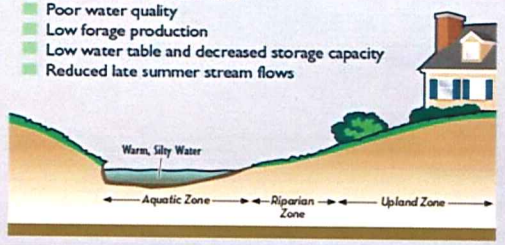
A Healthy Riparian (Stream) Habitat

- Good shade, cool water
- Abundant woody and organic debris in stream
- Abundant vegetation and roots to protect and stabilize banks
- Gravelly, narrow, deep channel
- Good fish and wildlife habitat
- Good water quality
- High forage production
- High water table and increased storage capacity
- High late summer stream flows



An Unhealthy Riparian (Stream) Habitat

- Little shade, warm water
- Lack of woody and organic debris in stream
- Little vegetation and roots to protect and stabilize banks
- Silty, wide, shallow channel
- Poor fish and wildlife habitat
- Poor water quality
- Low forage production
- Low water table and decreased storage capacity
- Reduced late summer stream flows



Courtesy of the Philadelphia Water Department

Streamside Riparian Buffers

A riparian buffer is a vegetated area along the edge of a stream that protects the banks from erosion and aids in the removal of pollutants that would otherwise enter the stream through overland runoff. Riparian buffers are key to a healthy stream ecosystem and are capable of intercepting sediment, nitrogen, phosphorus, and pesticides, all of which negatively effect the health of the Darby Creek. A riparian buffer also increases groundwater infiltration which helps to reduce flooding locally and downstream. Additionally, a riparian buffer provides necessary organic matter from fallen branches and leaves for aquatic life to survive. It is important to remember to never put your yard leaves or grass clippings in the creek as these will provide an excess of nutrients. The above right diagram illustrates the benefits of a riparian buffer. While it might not be possible to achieve all of the elements shown, replacing lawn grass with shrubs and other native vegetation can help increase bank stability and thus decrease erosion and sediment load in the creek. Sediment increases temperature, adds nutrients that can lead to excess algae and fish kills, smothers fish eggs, and clogs fish gills.

Creating a riparian buffer can be as simple as designating a no mow area. This area can then be planted with native wildflowers, shrubs and trees. The buffer should be made as wide as possible and you can leave pathways within the buffer to maintain access to the stream. For more information on establishing a riparian buffer on your property, visit **www.dcva.org. Check the website for upcoming workshops on Creek Friendly Lawn and Garden.**