

# RIVER VIEWS

## SHARK RIVER CLEANUP COALITION NEWSLETTER

FALL 2007



## HARVESTING RAINWATER WITH RAIN BARRELS

By Ed Lippincott

Collecting rainwater for use during dry months in rain barrels or other depositories is an ancient and traditional practice. Historical records show that rainwater was collected in simple clay containers as far back as 2,000 years ago and throughout other areas of the world after that. With the rising price of municipal water and drought restrictions now facing much of the United States during the summer months, more and more homeowners in our modern society are turning to this ancient practice to save money and protect this precious natural resource.

Besides helping the environment, an obvious reason for harvesting rainwater is to save money. Depending on the size of your house and the amount of rainfall in your area, you can collect a substantial amount of rainwater with a simple system. This extra water can have a significant impact on your water bill.

Rainwater stored in rain barrels has many uses. Some people find it mostly useful for watering their landscapes and gardens. Others find uses within the house as well. Rainwater can also be used for drinking but requires special treatment with a filtration system. You do not need a filtration system for landscape uses. You can use it directly from your rain barrel on your garden. If you're harvesting rainwater with rain barrels to use for watering your landscaping, the rainwater can help to improve the health of your garden, lawn, and trees.

Rain is a naturally soft water devoid of minerals, chlorine, fluoride, and other chemicals. For this reason, plants respond very well to rainwater. After all, it's what plants in the wild thrive on! Since the rainwater is usually collected from the roofs of houses, it picks up very little contamination when it falls.

You'll want to keep your roof clean of debris and potential contaminants to maximize purity.

The chemicals and hard water from many of our municipal water systems can produce an imbalance in the soil of your garden. Chemical fertilizers, fungicides, pesticides, and drought can also disrupt the balance and harmony of the soil. This imbalance causes trees and plants to weaken and makes them more susceptible to disease.

One of the best reasons to start harvesting rainwater with rain barrels is that if you teach and encourage others to do the same, you will help to spread the culture of rainwater collection and in turn help your larger community and the environment. It's important to remember that every living thing on the planet needs water to survive so we must expand our idea of community to the plants and animals that surround us.

### FRESHWATER FACTS

- If the world's water supply is compared to one gallon, freshwater would make up 4 ounces or 3 percent, and readily accessible freshwater would make up 2 drops. (Miller, G.T. 1998. Living in the Environment, 10th Edition. Wadsworth Publishers, Belmont, Ca)
- Humans already use approximately 54 percent of all accessible surface water runoff (usable, renewable freshwater). This is expected to increase to 70 percent by 2025. (Postel, Daily & Ehrlich. 1996. "Human Appropriation of Renewable Fresh Water." Science 271:785-788)

**SRCC Fall River Cleanup**  
**Saturday, October 6**  
**Memorial Park, Neptune City**  
**Landside Cleanup, 9am-12pm**  
**BBQ, 12pm-2pm**  
**Kayakers 1:30pm-4:30pm**  
**For further info contact: 732- 681-0059**

# Recharging our Water Through Rain Gardens

by Bill Sciarappa

A rain garden is a landscaped, shallow depression that allows rain and snowmelt to be collected and seep naturally into the ground. This helps recharge our groundwater supply and prevents non-point source pollution. Rain gardens are an important way to make our neighborhoods more attractive places to live while enhancing environmental health.

The benefits of having a rain garden in your landscape will reap much more than what is easily visible. During a heavy rainstorm much of the water quickly washes into streets from sidewalks, parking lots, and lawns. It then goes down storm drains and eventually ends up in local water bodies.

What you don't see washing away with the rain water are pollutants such as pesticides, fertilizers and petrochemicals which may have accumulated on lawns, driveways and streets.

A rain garden captures storm water and allows this water to penetrate and move into the ground instead of running off and down

into the storm drain. As the captured water slowly percolates into the ground, pollutants are filtered out, nutrients are used by the plants, or pesticides are broken down by microorganisms.

Minimizing runoff into storm drains also results in decreased sediment,



flooding, and shoreline damage. Compared to a conventional lawn, rain gardens allow 30% more water to soak into the ground. Because rain gardens are landscaped, they add beauty to a lawn and create a habitat for birds, butterflies and beneficial insects.

For best plant establishment and easier digging as a result of spring rains, start the actual construction in the spring. A summer start will work, but you may need to water the plants more often until they are established. Rain gardens can be located near downspouts to intercept only roof runoff, placed to collect water from lawn and roof, or along driveways and sidewalks. Garden areas are typically 100-300 sq. ft. and depend on your soil type.

Your plant selection is especially important. We suggest using native

hardy perennial species with well-established root systems that survive in both dry and wet conditions. Natives do not require substantial fertilization, absorb water more efficiently than turf-style lawns, and are much easier to maintain than exotic species. Plants should be different heights, shapes and textures and bloom at different times for aesthetic appeal.

In New Jersey, 90% of rainfall events are less than 1.25 inches, with approximately 44 total inches of rain per year. The rain garden will treat and recharge  $0.9 \times 44 \text{ inches} = 40 \text{ inches per year} = 3.3 \text{ ft. per year}$ . If the rain garden receives runoff from 1,000 sq. ft., total volume treated and recharged is  $1,000 \text{ sq. ft} \times 3.3 \text{ ft} = 3,300 \text{ cubic feet}$ , which is 25,000 gallons per year. Build 40 of these gardens in your neighborhood and we have treated and recharged 1,000,000 gallons of water per year.

For more detailed information, check the Rutgers Extension website <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/pubs/publication.asp?pid=FS513>

## SRCC Board of Directors

Ed Lippincott - Exec. Director

James McNamara - President

Jeff Hoffman - Treasurer

Kirsty Cronin - Secretary

Bill Sciarappa, Ph.D

John Brennan, Esq.

Jerry Meyer

*www.sharkriver.org*

732-681-0059

## HELP OUT THE SRCC !!



MAKE COPIES OF THE FLYERS ENCLOSED WITH THIS NEWSLETTER AND

DISTRIBUTE TO FRIENDS AND LOCAL BUSINESSES.

ONE PERSON CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!!!

# Critter Corner



The Least Tern

### Mission Statement

The mission of the Shark River Cleanup Coalition Inc. is to significantly enhance the water quality of the Shark River Estuary and its fresh water tributaries, to improve and protect habitats important to the conservation and abundance of the wildlife, to protect the recreational and commercial uses from degradation and pollution, thereby ensuring the ecology and economic stability of this important watershed.

The Shark River Cleanup Coalition has recently helped NJ Conserve Wildlife with their monitoring of the Least Tern nesting site on the First Avenue Beach in Belmar. The Least Tern is a colony nester that is listed as endangered in New Jersey and its nesting areas are protected by law. Least Terns began nesting in Belmar in 2000 with only 4 pairs and have nested there ever since with mixed success. This year 75 pairs of terns nested in Belmar, and preliminary data indicates a very high success rate, maybe the highest in Monmouth County. The most common causes of nesting failure are human disturbance and predation. The col-

ony in Belmar is located in between the Shark River Inlet and the Belmar Fishing Club and is easily viewed by accessing the beach at the fisherman's entrance at the base of the bridge or from the nature trail located near the Fishing Club. Bring your binoculars and please keep a safe distance from the birds and observe all posted signs. It's a good idea to wear a hat, since the birds will dive bomb you if you get too close and will also defecate on you if they feel threatened! For more detailed information try [http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/BirdGuide/Least\\_Tern.html](http://www.birds.cornell.edu/AllAboutBirds/BirdGuide/Least_Tern.html)

## Shark River Cleanup Coalition Membership Application

The SRCC is a nonprofit 501(c3) corporation. All contributions are tax deductible as allowable by law.

### **Please print**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

### **Enclosed is my check for:**

Student, Junior or Senior (under 18 or over 65)	\$25 per year _____
Individual member (\$1 per week)	\$52 per year _____
Family Membership (\$10 per month)	\$120 per year _____
Sponsoring Family Membership (\$1 per day)	\$365 per year _____
Business Donor	\$250 per year _____
Business Sponsor ( free 1 year ad on website)	\$500 per year _____
Donation only (any amount)	_____

**Make checks payable to SRCC and mail to: PO Box 2241 Neptune City, NJ 07754**

**Phone 732-681-0059 New Jersey Charity registration Number CH 2165700**

# PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE: THE SRCC NEEDS YOUR HELP!!

By Jim MacNamara

Since becoming President this past May, I have come to realize the need for our Executive Board to reach out to our membership for help. We have six voting Board Members and a non-voting Executive Director, all of whom have full time jobs. The organization has been so successful that it has grown larger than we seven people can manage effectively.

Many of you attended our 1<sup>st</sup> golf outing, which was a great success. Unfortunately, we were not able to hold an outing this year due to a lack of volunteers to help organize it. Many of you also attended our successful Riverfest fundraisers, which required a lot of planning and coordination. We currently are seeking volunteers to help organize Riverfest for this fall, and hope a few of you will step up to the plate.

I realize that many of you cannot volun-

teer your time and have instead made greatly appreciated financial contributions to show your support. Perhaps others of you, though, would like to volunteer to help, but aren't sure just how.

I believe if we could harness the resources and talent within our membership to coordinate one key event or project per year, we could take the SRCC to a new level. I envision a database of volunteers with a wide variety of expertise and interests that could be matched to the constant flow of projects we are asked to undertake.

If you can spare some time, even if just several hours each month, I urge you to contact us or visit the volunteer link on our web site ([www.sharkriver.org](http://www.sharkriver.org)) and take a few minutes to select the areas in which

you would like to volunteer.

Many of you remember when we needed support to fight proposed development in our watershed located in Tinton Falls. We packed that meeting room in Tinton Falls, where there were so many people that Tinton Falls had to reschedule and relocate the meeting to a gymnasium.

Two weeks later we packed that gymnasium and won the day. Shark River Cleanup Coalition was the talk of every environmental group as well as every developer in the state. We made a statement as a collective, organized, cohesive group, and people sat up and took notice.

I would like to tap that enthusiasm within our membership once more to build an even stronger, more sustainable watchdog for our watershed and community. Even one person **can** make a difference!!



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