

RUTGERS

New Jersey Agricultural
Experiment Station



April 2024

WATER PAGES eNEWSLETTER

A special Earth Day message from the desk of Chris Obropta on April 22, 2024 ~

Happy Earth Day! I woke up this morning, hopped on the scale, and realized it is time. I really need to focus on losing some weight and getting healthy. This is no different than any other Monday, but this week I really mean it. No more McDonalds, no more Cheetos, and no more bourbon (well maybe a little bourbon, let's not go crazy). Earth Day is like this for the people across the world. We wake up on Earth Day and realize that we need to do better for the planet and the people that inhabit this great big blue marble that we call Earth, and this year we really mean it. Last Friday 177 people attended my Green Infrastructure Champions Class on how to design and build a rain garden. If all these people spend a little time on the beautiful weekend building a rain garden, collectively we would be managing over 6 million gallons of stormwater runoff per year. This is what it takes; everyone must do their part, and collectively we can make a difference. Well, maybe that is not all it will take. We need our government to step up. Did you know the United States Department of Defense (DOD) is the world's largest institutional user of petroleum and correspondingly, the single largest institutional producer of greenhouse gases in the world? Maybe we should think about reigning in the DOD. This weekend congress came together and passed a \$95 billion dollar aid package for Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan. Most of these funds are for B&B – Bombs and Bullets. Most of the funds will go to the military industrial complex, big companies that make bombs and bullets. Can you image if Lockheed Martin, Raytheon, and General Dynamics dredged lakes and installed stormwater management systems instead of building military weapons? There would be no more harmful algal blooms (HABs) in the United States. We would be managing rain where it lands before it becomes stormwater runoff, carrying pollutants to our waterways and flooding the downstream communities. If only the environmental groups had the lobbying power of the military industrial complex.

Back to Earth Day and protecting the planet, we still need to all do our part. I will stop buying diet coke in plastic bottles; I will continue to work with the residents of New Jersey to build rain gardens, and I will write my congressional leaders asking them to pass the next aid bill for our planet. Instead of B&B (bombs and bullets), let's use the funding for P&P (people and planet).

~ Christopher C. Obropta, Ph.D., P.E., Extension Specialist in Water Resources

Spring maintenance tips for your rain garden



It's that time of year! Rain gardens are starting to bloom once again, and here are a few spring maintenance tips to keep your planted green infrastructure functional and beautiful.

~ Identify desirable plants using your maintenance guide and plant list.

~ Prune or cut back previous perennial growth.

~ Remove non-desirable and invasive plant species.

~ Inspect inlet and outlet structures, stone, pipes, drains, and grates.

~ Remove accumulated debris from the rain garden.

~ Add a 2 to 3-inch layer of undyed triple shredded hardwood mulch. This will help curtail weeds and retain moisture during the heat of summer.

~ Start early and weed often to keep the work manageable and fun!



**REGISTRATION
OPEN!**

2024 NJ SUSTAINABILITY SUMMIT

FRIDAY, MAY 3, 2024
9 AM - 4 PM
AT BELL WORKS, HOLMDEL

- 16 Sustainability Sessions
- Sustainability Exhibit
- Networking with 500 change-makers

#EmpoweringChange



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