

Living Streamside

Guide to Designing your Property and Protecting our Watershed



BACKYARD BUFFER PROGRAM

No-Mow Zone

Tip Sheet # 1

Description:

- A stream buffer where mowing does not occur and Pennsylvania native plants are grown.
- You decide the width (5 feet, 10 feet or more). The wider the buffer, the greater the services and functions provided.



Functions/Benefits:

- Improves water quality reaching the stream
- Low growing dense grasses and wildflowers trap pollutants
- Creates wildlife habitat
- Reduces area of mowed lawn. Reduced mowing saves gas and money and protects the atmosphere
- Shrubs and trees provide shade to cool the stream
- Stabilizes soil and reduces bank erosion
- Slows stormwater runoff and increases infiltration



Photo Credits: 1) Western Michigan University, Environmental Safety and Emergency Management, 2) Sustainable Walworth, Walworth County Wisconsin



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General Installation:

1. Remove existing sod/turf from top of bank by a) renting a sod cutter to remove or b) smothering with black plastic or newspaper (for a growing season).
2. Till soil and add/mix in amendments (topsoil, compost or other organics).
3. Seed with native mix of wildflowers and grasses (suppliers can help recommend specific mixes based on your site conditions).
4. Install 100% biodegradable fiber fabric mat or erosion control blanket over seeded area.
5. Plant container plants (trees, shrubs and/or perennials). Cut an "X" in biodegradable fabric mat/blanket and dig a hole for the plant to be installed.
6. Water until vegetation becomes established.
7. For meadow mix, mow once/year (early spring) to 6 inches in height (don't mow any shorter).

Sources:

100% biodegradable fiber fabric mat/erosion control blankets (weed and seed free):

- Pennington Seed Starter Mat® (available at local home/hardware stores)
- Curlex® erosion control blanket (available at www.benmeadows.com)

Seed mixes/packets:

- Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve (packets only) web: www.bhwp.org, phone: (215) 862-2924
- Ernst Conservation Seed (retail/\$25min order), web: www.ernstseed.com, phone: (800) 873-3321
- Pinelands Nursery & Supply (bulk orders, 5 lb min), web: www.pinelandsnursery.com, phone: (800) 291-9486

Cost Estimates:

100% biodegradable fiber fabric mat/erosion control blankets (weed and seed free):

Pennington Seed Starter Mat® - size/cost: 39" x 20' \$15/roll

Curlex® erosion control blanket- size/cost: 1' x 101' \$45/roll

Seed Mixes:

Riparian Buffer Mix (similar to Basin Bottom Mix) from suppliers: 1/2 to 1/3 lb per 1,000 Sq Ft (\$40-75 per lb)

Bowman's Hill Wildflower Preserve Seed Packets: \$2-3/packet, yield 8-10 pots of plants

References

- A Homeowner's Guide to Stormwater Management, Philadelphia Water Department (www.delawareestuary.org/pdf/HomeownersGuideSWMgmt.pdf)
- Guide to Gardening for Life in Southeastern Pennsylvania (http://www.audubon.org/bird/at_home/guidetogardeningforlife_pa.html)
- List of native plant nurseries: Pennsylvania Native Plant Society (www.pawildflower.org)
- Adopt-a-buffer Toolkit, Delaware Riverkeeper Network (www.delawareriverkeeper.org/pdf/Toolkit-Final.pdf)

Note: PWD does not endorse any products or suppliers identified nor can they verify any information/claims these sources provide. Design and installation of a project is site specific and the responsibility of the property owner.



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