

A HOMEOWNER'S GUIDE TO WATERSHED-FRIENDLY LIVING

Actions you can take in your yard
to benefit water, wildlife, and way of life.



CHAUTAUQUA
WATERSHED
CONSERVANCY



Clean Water Begins in Your Backyard!

We drink it, bathe in it, flush it, swim in it... Water is an integral part of our everyday lives. The water you use to drink, wash, and cook comes from a watershed near your home. Every community, whether it is hilly or flat, urban or rural, is part of a watershed. Within this watershed, all water drains to the lowest point, carrying runoff from roads, parking lots, lawns, and farms. This includes soil, oil, road salt, organic materials, bacteria, pesticides, and fertilizers all ending up in our local lakes and streams. This runoff can lead to unhealthy places for critters like fish and aquatic insects to live, not to mention creating high bacterial levels and algal blooms that make it unsafe for humans to drink or swim in.

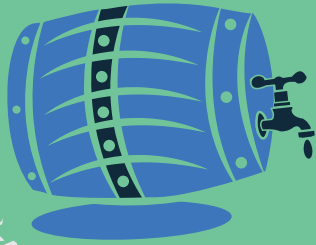
BUT THERE IS GOOD NEWS!

The real environmental power and change lies in your yard and in the hands of committed homeowners like you!



This guide addresses yard care tips you can practice right at home to help protect our watershed. Regardless of where you live or what size property you own, making watershed-friendly choices can help protect water quality, lessen and prevent stormwater runoff and flooding, and create healthy habitat for our local birds, bees, butterflies, and other wildlife. These practices will also re-connect you with nature, enhance the enjoyment of your yard, and increase the value of your home. So, whether you are a full-time or seasonal resident, Chautauqua County depends on you to make responsible decisions and practice watershed-friendly living!

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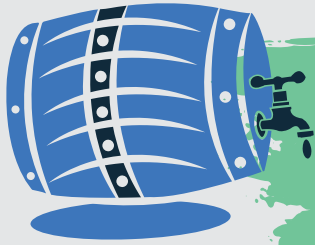
Eliminate Pollutants



LakeScapes Program



Helpful Resources



Capture and Infiltrate

By capturing runoff in gardens or rain barrels, water has time to infiltrate into the ground, filtering out pollutants, minimizing flooding, and recharging our drinking water.

GO NATIVE

Native plants require little maintenance once established. They are acclimated to our local weather, resistant to local pests and disease, and do not need fertilizers, pesticides, or supplemental watering. They also provide habitat for local birds, butterflies, and other beneficial wildlife.



BUILD A BUFFER

A vegetative buffer is simply an area of native plants along the edge of your property that will provide privacy and help slow, capture, and filter stormwater runoff from not only your property but from your neighbor's as well.



HOLD BACK THE FLOOD

Impervious surfaces such as pavement and roofs cause rain to run off rapidly, which can lead to flooding and stream bank erosion. Minimize runoff by redirecting downspouts into vegetated areas, installing rain barrels, or planting a rain garden.

Harvested rainwater captures runoff from roofs and gutters into a rain barrel or cistern and can be used to water plants and vegetable gardens, greatly reducing the amount of outdoor household water usage.



A rain garden is simply a shallow depression where deep-rooted native plants filter and absorb rainwater. Not only do they manage stormwater, but they also provide essential habitat for birds, butterflies, and beneficial insects.



Minimize Runoff

When you reduce the amount of stormwater running off your yard and into the watershed, fewer non-point source pollutants are washed into our drinking water and local waterways.



CHOOSE PERVIOUS SURFACES

If you are considering a new patio, driveway, or hardscape, choose a permeable material which allows rain and stormwater to soak in through the surface. Permeable paving surfaces reduce stormwater runoff and help replenish our drinking supply.

GARDEN YOUR GUTTERS

Runoff from gutters and downspouts from your roof should be directed away from your home and driveway into your lawn, garden landscape, or rain garden.



CLEAN THE CLUTTER FROM THE GUTTER

Keep fallen leaves and debris out of storm drains and street gutters to allow for the free flow of stormwater, which will help keep flooding and ponding in roadways to a minimum.

SHRINK YOUR LAWN

Pick a spot in your yard and just stop mowing! Lawn does not infiltrate or absorb rainfall as effectively as a meadow. Sprinkle seeds and plant individual natives directly in your existing lawn and allow them to spread naturally.





Eliminate Pollutants

Non-point source pollution can be stopped at its source if each homeowner knows what to do.



PLANT MORE PLANTS

Plant more native trees, shrubs, and perennials on your property. Their long, strong root systems will help prevent soil erosion and filter and absorb excess sediments and nutrients running off your property.



SLOW ON USING SALT

Shovel or sweep snow first. Remove all the snow you can. You may find you won't need that much salt at all. If needed, look for eco-friendly, kid- and pet- safe options.



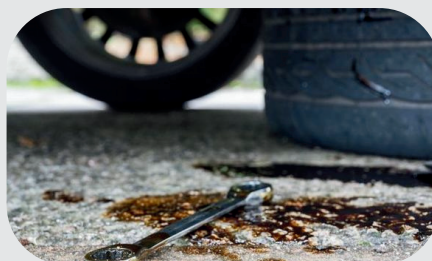
IF YOUR DOG POOPS, YOU SCOOP

Dog poop is not fertilizer. Clean up pet waste, no matter where it is deposited, to prevent nutrient and bacteria pollution.



MAINTAIN YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM

For the average home, it is recommended that your septic system be inspected and pumped out every three (3) years.



CLEAN UP LEAKS

Keep your car well maintained. Check for drips, and repair leaks as soon as possible.



USE LESS CHEMICALS

Reduce or eliminate the use of fertilizers and pesticides on your lawn and garden. Mulch your grass clippings into your lawn for free and natural fertilizer!



LakeScapes Program

The Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy is here to help with our FREE LakeScapes program!

LakeScapes is a one-on-one educational program that provides a FREE personal yard consultation to any homeowner, business owner, organization, school, or municipality within Chautauqua County.

We give guidance on how to dry up wet areas in your yard, build filtering buffers, and/or create native habitats that provide food and places for our local bees, birds, and other wildlife to live. We also discuss landscaping and the importance of native plants, shrinking your lawn, and naturalizing your yards. Watershed-friendly living is easy! By just making a few small changes in the way you maintain your property, you can help filter and clean the water running through your yard and help keep our watersheds, waterways, and drinking water safe and healthy.

Our recommendations not only beautify your yard but also protect water quality, enhance your way of life and the wildlife that live and thrive within it! These backyard consultations and technical assistance are FREE and can include plant and landscape designs as well. For more information or to schedule a free visit, call 716.664.2166 ext. 1005 or email info@chautauquawatershed.org today!





Helpful Resources

LakeScapes Information & Education

Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy

716.664.2166 ext. 1005

info@chautauquawatershed.org

www.chautauquawatershed.org

Shoreline & Streambank Erosion Issues/Projects

Chautauqua County Soil & Water Conservation District

716.664.2351 ext.5

chaut-co@soilwater.org

www.soilwater.org

Native Plant Lists

NYFA: NY Flora Atlas

<https://newyork.plantatlas.usf.edu/>

Buffalo Niagara Waterkeeper

<https://bnwaterkeeper.org/nativeplantguide/>

Western NY Native Plants Collaborative

<https://www.wnynativeplants.org/native-plants.html>

Local Native Plant Nurseries

Royal Fern Nursery

www.facebook.com/royalfernnursery/

Amanda's Native Garden

<https://www.amandasnativeplants.com/>

A comprehensive list of other local plant nurseries in and around Chautauqua County that offer native plants is available on our website.

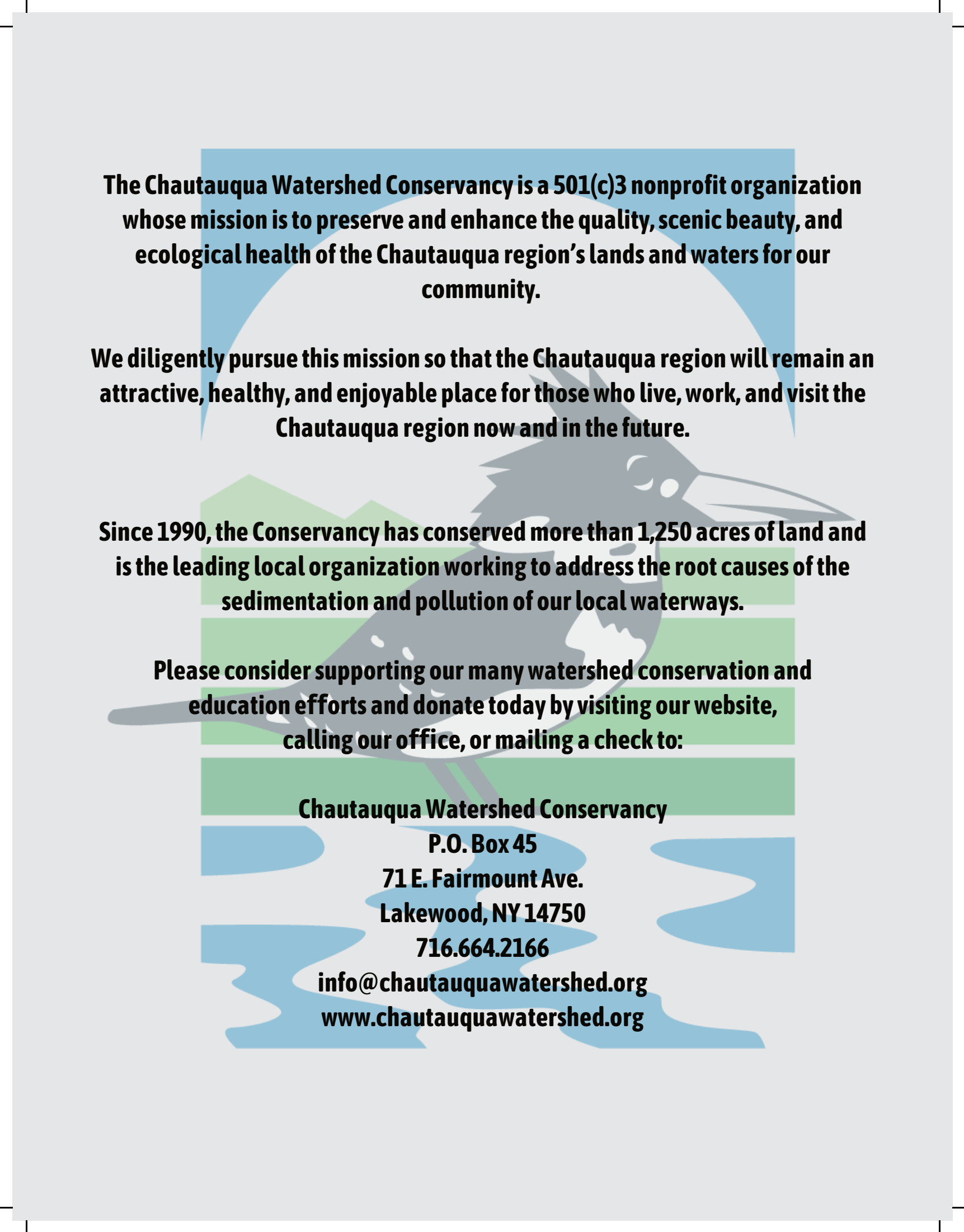
Local Soil Tests & Gardening Tips

Chautauqua County Master Gardeners

<http://chautauqua.cce.cornell.edu/gardening>

chautauquamg@cornell.edu 716.664.9502 ext. 224





The Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization whose mission is to preserve and enhance the quality, scenic beauty, and ecological health of the Chautauqua region's lands and waters for our community.

We diligently pursue this mission so that the Chautauqua region will remain an attractive, healthy, and enjoyable place for those who live, work, and visit the Chautauqua region now and in the future.

Since 1990, the Conservancy has conserved more than 1,250 acres of land and is the leading local organization working to address the root causes of the sedimentation and pollution of our local waterways.

Please consider supporting our many watershed conservation and education efforts and donate today by visiting our website, calling our office, or mailing a check to:

Chautauqua Watershed Conservancy

P.O. Box 45

71 E. Fairmount Ave.

Lakewood, NY 14750

716.664.2166

info@chautauquawatershed.org

www.chautauquawatershed.org



"I am not separate from the ecology of my small yard – I am part and parcel of it. In many ways, I am its key player."

- Anonymous