



WATER IS LIKE GOLD!!! Use Rain Barrels

Special points of interest:

- Water is like Gold!
- 2010 Envirothon
- Weed spotlight
- Farm of the month

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A rain barrel is a rainwater collection system that stores rooftop runoff to be used later for watering lawns and gardens. When rainwater falls on your rooftop, it runs off into gutters and downspouts and either soaks into the soils of the surrounding landscape, or flows into the street. The water that ends up in the street is called stormwater.

Rain barrels are a fantastic way to reduce the amount of stormwater running into storm drains during wet weather and reduce the amount of fresh water being used up during dry weather. Rain Barrels are an inexpensive and effective way to be green! Rain barrels and larger collection systems can be purchased from many lawn & garden stores or made out of food grade plastic or wooden barrels.

Parts of a rain barrel are:

Inlet—where rain water enters your barrel. In order to keep debris and mosquitoes out of the barrel, it should be

screened or covered in some way.

Outlet—how you get water out of the barrel for use in your yard. You can hook a



hose to the spigot or simply transport the water with a watering can. If you are having trouble getting the water out of the barrel, make its stand higher and let gravity help increase the water pressure.

Overflow—allows excess water to leave the barrel when it's full. During most rainstorms your barrel will fill up long before it has stopped raining. Attach a hose to the

overflow and place the hose's end away from your foundation. If you are interested in capturing even more stormwater, you can hook another rain barrel to the first barrel's overflow.

Operation and Maintenance

Rain barrels should be drained and removed for the winter months to prevent ice damage. It is recommended that you remove the existing downspout and elbow intact and store for reinstallation in the late fall. You can then add another downspout section that will need to be custom cut to an appropriate height above your rain barrel.

The way I see it, if you want the rainbow, you gotta put up with the rain.
~ Dolly Parton



8 Reasons to Plant Trees

1. Trees produce oxygen
2. Trees make effective sound barriers
3. Trees become "carbon sinks"
4. Trees shade and cool
5. Trees clean the air
6. Trees act as wind breaks

7. Trees fight soil erosion
8. Trees increase property values.

Stop in or call, we still have trees available for the spring 2010 pickup and the equipment to help plant!

A fitting Earth Day celebration – Minnesota Envirothon set for April 21st at Lake Bemidji State Park

More than 100 high school students, representing eight school districts from north central Minnesota, will gather at Lake Bemidji State Park on April 21, 2010 - a prelude to Earth Day celebrations – to participate in the Area VIII Minnesota Envirothon. The annual event, coordinated by area Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs), is a hands-on outdoor competition, designed

to promote natural resource involvement and education.

Throughout the day, students will rotate through five learning stations regarding wetlands, wildlife, forestry, soils, and a current environment issue which is presented by natural resource professionals relative to

the field. The students will work in teams of five collaboratively to answer 20 questions at each learning station, and present an 8-10 minute oral presentation, competing for a chance to advance to the state and national Envirothon events.



**"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtfully committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."
~Margaret Mead**

The Pond in the Back 40... What's its Use?

Have you ever been wandering around the Back 40 in early spring and noticed that funny little pond? The one that just seems to be there, but what for? There is news about that pond, it is home to many creatures as well as being a vital part of their life.

In early spring, as days grow longer and temperatures warm, snow begins to melt. Then spring rains arrive. Before long, snowmelt and rainwater have formed a pool of water called a *vernal pond*.

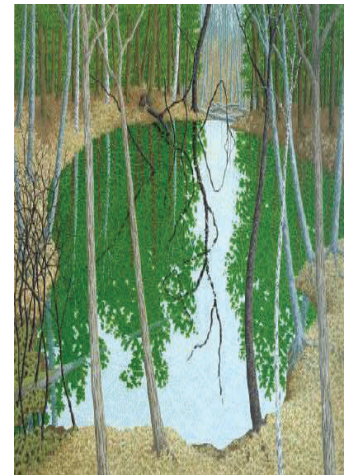
All vernal ponds are small. Some are in fields or other open land, but most are surrounded by woods. In the shade of trees, ponds retain water longer. Dead leaves on the forest floor become the pond bottom. A rich supply of dead leaves serves as food and shelter for

pond dwellers.

A vernal pond is a temporary gathering place for critters from across the animal kingdom. Crustaceans such as fairy shrimp, insects such as beetles and flies, arachnids such as spiders, and mollusks such as snails and clams all abide here. Amphibians, reptiles, birds, and a few mammals show up too. Some critters come to find a mate. Some stop by for a bite to eat. This story tells about a vernal pond's life cycle and introduces some of its visitors.

By mid- to late summer, most vernal ponds dry up. Because they are sometimes dry, vernal ponds do not have fish. This makes them a safe place for tadpoles and other critters that fish would eat.

As spring turns into summer and the days get hot-



ter, the pond water warms and begins to evaporate. Some small ponds will be dry by July. Others stay wet until fall. And some might hold water for a few years, only to dry up during a hot and arid time.

Before their pond vanishes, pond critters must grow up and move away or go into a dormant stage to cope with the dry season.





Weed Spotlight: Common & Glossy Buckthorn

A little history...

Buckthorn is not native to this country. Common or European buckthorn, and glossy buckthorn are the two non-native invasive buckthorn species found in Minnesota. European buckthorn was first brought to the state from Europe in the mid-1800s as a very popular hedging material. It escaped and became a nuisance plant, forming dense thickets in forests, yards, parks, and roadsides. It crowded out native plants and displaced the native shrubs and small trees in the mid-layer of the forest where many species of birds nested. Euro-

pean buckthorn is found in nearly every Minnesota county, despite the fact that the sale, transport, and movement of these plants is prohibited. Glossy buckthorn, also from Europe, has been sold by the nursery trade in two different forms. The cultivar "Columnaris" is narrow and tall; the cultivar "Aspenifolia" spreads up to 10 feet and has narrow leaves that give it a ferny texture.

Why it's a Problem:

- Out-competes native plants for nutrients, light, and moisture
- Degrades wildlife habitat
- Threatens the future of forests, wetlands, prairies, and other natu-

ral habitats

- Contributes to erosion by shading out other plants that grow on the forest floor
- Serves as host to other pests, such as crown rust fungus and soybean aphid
- Forms an impenetrable layer of vegetation
- Lacks "natural controls" like insects or disease that would curb its growth

PLEASE CONTACT THE
CLEARWATER SWCD IF YOU HAVE
QUESTIONS ON
IDENTIFICATION OR
TREATMENT (218) 694 6845

www.clearwaterswcd.org

Common Buckthorn—*Rhamnus cathartica*

Nursery Cultivars: None

Shape of Plant: height: 10-25' tall, oval form, upright

Habitat: Dry areas, like woodlands, savannahs, abandoned fields, and roadsides. Will grow in full sun or shade.

Leaves: egg-shaped with finely toothed edges: dark

green, dull to glossy. 3-5 pair curved leaf veins. Leaves stay dark green lake into Autumn.

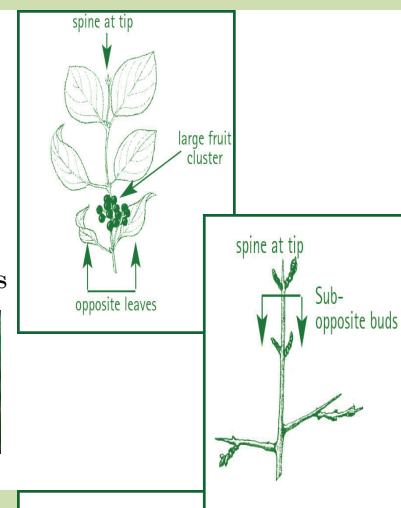
Flowers: small, yellow-green in color. 4 petals produced in May.



Stems: buds are opposite. Sharp thorn at tip of

twig.

Fruit and Seed: arranged in large clusters with round berry-like fruit 1/4" in diameter. Green/black in color. Each berry has 3-4 seeds and berries are persistent.



Glossy Buckthorn—*Frangula alnus*

Nursery Cultivars: Columnaris (Tall hedge buckthorn), Aspenifolia (Fernleaf buckthorn)

Shape of Plant: height: 10-18' tall, oval form, upright

Habitat: Wet areas (bogs, marshes, wetlands, pond edges). Will grow in dry areas. Will grow in full sun or shade.

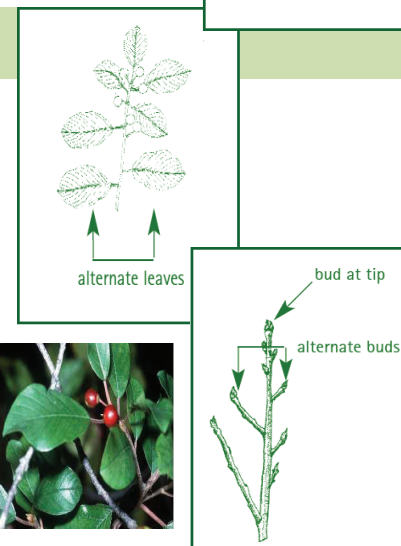
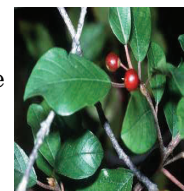
Leaves: egg-shaped with smooth edges: dark green, glossy. 8-9 pair curved leaf veins. Leaves stay green lake into Autumn.

Flowers: small, creamy-green in color. 5 petals produced in late May -June.



Stems: buds are opposite. NO sharp thorn at tip of twig.

Fruit and Seed: arranged in large clusters with round berry-like fruit 1/4" in diameter. Red/Brown in color. Each berry has 2-3 seeds and berries are NOT persistent.





Clearwater Soil & Water
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**Our mission is simple—
to promote the wise use and
improvement of our county re-
sources, in order that future
generations will inherit an eco-
nomically viable county that has
made wise choices in resource
management.**



Are you discouraged with your grazing system?

Begin planning this year's grazing plan and consider what improvements need to be made. The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provides technical and financial assistance in planning healthy and productive grazing systems. Contact the NRCS for more information and to find out about available programs that may benefit your farmland. The Clearwater County NRCS is located in the USDA Service Center, at 312 Main Ave. N. in Bagley, or by phone at (218) 694-6584 ext. 3.

<http://www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov/>

The USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

*The 2010–2020 draft of the
Comprehensive Local Water
Management Plan is now available for
review on our website www.clearwaterswcd.org.*

Beautiful Farm of the Month

The Clearwater SWCD is looking for your nomination photos for the Most Beautiful Farmstead in Clearwater County. Each month the Board will decide which farm photo will be given the “Most Beautiful Farm in Clearwater County” title. The District Board believes that in addition to conserving soil and water, keeping our rural area beautiful is important and worthy of being encouraged. Things the District looks for when choosing a beautiful farmstead are the farm's gen-

eral appearance, buildings, windbreaks, unique features, diversity and any difficult situation the farm may have, such as being located on a hillside, or near low, wetland. All photos received into the office during the month will be shown at the monthly regular board meeting and one photo will be given the winner status. Watch our newsletter for the monthly winners.

