

Plan This Winter to Improve Tinkers Creek Next Spring

There is never a bad time of the year to think about what can be done to improve the watershed of Tinkers Creek. What better way is there to escape from Old Man Winter's impending visit than to start planning for springtime projects? Here are some ideas that will do just that, and will also kick start your efforts to improve and protect the Tinkers Creek Watershed.

- **Plan a Rain Garden** - There are numerous on-line resources to get you started...simply search "rain garden plans" in your browser. Another option is to contact the Tinkers Creek Watershed Partners or your local county soil & water conservation district to request a copy of "*Rain Garden Manual for Homeowners*". If you're feeling more adventurous, there is still time to actually construct your rain garden and prepare it for a springtime planting. Be sure to contact your community's building department for any permits that may be required.
- **Build a Rain Barrel** - Be ready to capture the rain from those springtime storms and have plenty of water available when you are ready to plant your vegetable gardens and new landscaping.
- **Construct a Compost Bin** - Again, there are numerous plans on-line, and there are a wide variety of materials that can be used. The best designs provide three bins: one to add fresh produce scraps and yard wastes to; one to "cook" the compost; and the last to store finished compost.
- **Perform Soil Tests** - Know what nutrients your soil has too little of, or perhaps too much of, so you can prescribe the best early-season fertilizer application. Contact your local Ohio State University Extension office.

Don't know what to get that person who has everything? Consider the following holiday and wintertime birthday gift ideas that will help friends and loved-ones get a head start on their own watershed-friendly projects:

- Faucet aerators and low-flow water fixtures (remember...the less water we use, the less water we pollute).
- Soaker hoses
- A water filter system or a water filter pitcher (pair these with a reusable water bottle, or just gift them a water bottle with a built-in filter)
- A compost tumbler or a pre-fabricated compost bin (pair these with a compost pail and a pitchfork)
- A pre-fabricated rain barrel or a do-it-yourself rain barrel kit.
- Soil test kits
- Books on any of the above topics