

# Everyone's Responsible For Clean, Abundant Drinking Water

COLUMBUS, Ohio — The quality of water in lakes, streams and ponds affects the quality of the water you drink, said Eric Norland, Ohio State University Extension water quality coordinator.

"Many people don't understand that the quality of surface water can impact the quality of their drinking water," Norland said. "They think ground water is their only source of drinking water."

There are more than 60,000 ponds smaller than one acre in Ohio, and many of them are used for private drinking water supplies, he said. About 60 percent of the state's public water supply systems also draw water from surface water sources.

Drinking Water Week is May 3-9, and educational events in libraries, schools, drinking water treatment plants, shopping malls, city halls and other places will be held to show the importance of drinking water and how individuals can guard the nation's drinking water supply.

"The week hopes to raise public understanding of our drinking water supplies and show people what happens to water prior to it coming out of the tap," Norland said. "Each and every one of us is responsible for protecting our drinking water supplies, whether from private ponds or public rivers, lakes and streams, and our daily

decisions can either improve or degrade our water's quality."

There are many things people can do to protect or improve the quality of surface waters, he said. Land developers can prevent sediments from escaping construction sites, agricultural producers can control erosion and properly handle pesticides and livestock manure, and anyone can schedule river cleanups or hazardous waste collections.

Things people can do to improve drinking water quality every day include: choose organic paints and natural finishes; use phosphate-free detergents; choose natural cleansers such as vinegar, ammonia and baking soda; support the preservation of wetlands that help clean water; urge local officials to start a wellhead protection program; replace underground storage tanks with above-ground storage; have abandoned wells sealed by a licensed contractor; and appeal to political figures to enforce regulations regarding the dumping of hazardous wastes.

"And, preventing water pollution from occurring is usually cheaper than paying to clean it up," Norland said.

Norland is one of many people helping create a Source Water Assessment Program, or SWAP, in Ohio. The Safe Drinking Water Act Amendments of 1996 require

that all states establish SWAPs. Ohio's SWAP plans, which must be submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency by Feb. 6, 1999, will describe water source areas in the state that need protection, list significant contaminants in these areas and determine how susceptible the state's public water supplies are to contamination.

"These assessments look at where water comes from and what the potential contamination sources are," Norland said. "They should help states and localities develop plans to avoid costly contamination events."

Conservation of drinking water also is important, especially in areas where water yields are low. The more water people use, the more water needs to be treated be-

fore it can be returned to streams and other water sources, Norland said. Water treatment is expensive and consumes energy.

Excess water used outside that is not treated before returning to water sources has the potential to carry pollutants through surface runoff.

"It also makes good economic sense to conserve water if you're on a public water supply, because the less you use, the less you pay for," Norland said.

To conserve water, people can:

- Fill a pitcher with tap water and put it in a refrigerator for a cold drink, rather than running the tap until it is cold every time.
- Defrost frozen food in the refrigerator or in the microwave in-

stead of running water over it.

- Check faucets, toilets and pipes for leaks.

- When washing dishes by hand, use one basin for washing and another for rinsing, instead of letting the water run.

- Insulate a water heater and all hot water pipes, so less water will be wasted before hot water flows.

- Use a broom instead of a hose to clean sidewalks and driveways.

- Use a moisture indicator to tell when a lawn needs watering and when it doesn't.

People who are interested in more information about drinking water, Drinking Water Week, or educational water-related activities for youth can contact the 4-H agent at their county office of Ohio State University Extension.

## NYS IPM Berry Marketing Program Deadline May 1

OWEGO, N.Y. — The 1998 New York State integrated pest management (IPM) Berry Marketing Program is open to all strawberry, raspberry, and blueberry growers in New York.

To sign on, contact the New York State Berry Growers Association (NYSBGA), 3965 Waverly Road, Owego, NY 13827, (607) 687-2874, fax (607) 687-9172.

Sign up deadline is May 1.

The program, established in 1997, incorporates grower certification with aggressive marketing strategies to meet the expanding consumer demand for fresh, locally-grown fruit that tastes good and is good for the environment.

While most growers in the state already produce berries using IPM

practices, membership in the association and certification as an IPM grower are necessary to make full use of the program and its benefits.

For additional information about the NYS IPM Berry Marketing Program, about IPM practices, and about other topics related to marketing, contact the NYSBGA.

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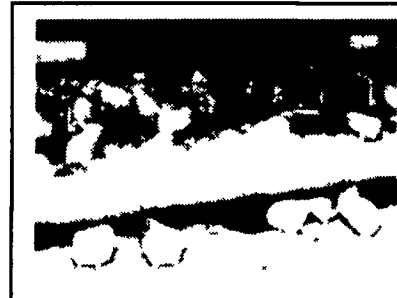
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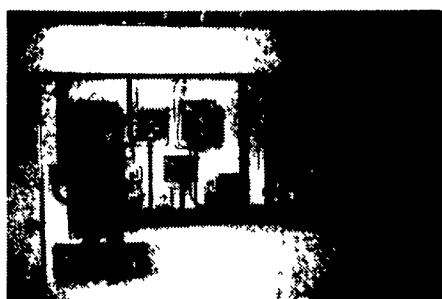
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