Clinic to offer advice on ponds

Many of us dream of having property with a pond—a place to escape, or maybe swim, fish, or even to provide drinking water.

However, the thought of building a pond or maintaining one may be daunting to a property owner. Quality drinking water can be a real problem for individuals living in some rural areas. Well drilling may be expensive, particularly if the aquifer that contains quality drinking water is deep. A pond may be a more cost-effective option.

Other ponds may be built for aesthetics and a place to relax and occasionally swim or fish. With the proper design and management, the same pond can be used for all these purposes and drinking water.

An individual may believe that a pond could be located anywhere in the area, since much of land is an extension of the Great Black Swamp. However, only certain soil types can hold water without adding expensive liners.

All ponds require proper management to be able to provide drinking water, fish habitat, and a desirable environment for swimming. Nobody likes to sit by a pond covered with scum or swim in slimy water of algae growth—even small pond owners need to be concerned about toxic algae.

Ponds that are not properly maintained may look more like a wetland habitat filled with caterpillars and other weedy plants rather than a place inviting kids and grandkids to swim.

The internet has all sorts of answers to pond problems, offering the customer various chemicals, exotic fish, and expensive aerating fountains. All of these options are effective when used properly, but how much do they help or are they just cosmetic?

Individuals may not realize that the area has many resources that will provide information and assistance in building and maintaining ponds.

Hancock County Soil Water & Conservation District office provides resources in building a pond, and the Ohio State University Extension office provides resources for maintaining a pond. Already this year I have received questions on aerators, algae, fish, and giant water bugs.

To introduce the community to all these resources, a Pond Clinic will be held at Shelter House 4 at Riverbend Recreation Area (on Township Road 208) from 5 p.m. to 8 p.m. on Wednesday, June 13.

The agenda for the program:

• 6 p.m. — Welcome and introduction, Ed Lentz, Ohio State University Extension.
  • 6:10 p.m. — Design and construction of ponds, Gary Tuttle and Chad Carroll, Soil & Water Conservation District.
  • 6:20 p.m. — Ponds for drinking water and aeration, Flag City Water Systems.
  • 7:45 p.m. — Pond chemicals, Ericka Kramb.
  • 7:10 p.m. — Management of algae and weeds, Eugene Braig, OSU pond specialist.

• 7:50 p.m. — Individual questions and answers.

There will be plenty of time for questions during and after the program. Bring your own lawn chair if you like to customize your seating comfort. You may also want to bring mosquito repellant since they may be present for special effects.

The Pond Clinic will be of interest whether you already have a pond or are considering construction of a new one. It is free and open to the public.

Contact the Hancock County SWCD office at 419-422-6569 or osudc@scenet.org or OSU Extension office for additional information.

Lentz is extension educator for agriculture and natural resources for the Ohio State University Extension Service in Hancock County. He can be reached at 419-422-3851 or via email at lentz.38@osu.edu.

Lentz can be heard with Vaun Wickerham on weekdays at 6:35 a.m. on WFIN, at 5:45 a.m. on WXXA-FM, and at 5:28 a.m. at 106.3 The Fox.