



# WESTTOWN GAZETTE

A Quarterly Newsletter To The Citizens Of Westtown Township - Fall Issue #19



Westtown Day 2016

## Manager’s Message:

In the past two and one-half years there have been three major house fires in Westtown Township where the buildings were a total loss. There were two this year with the most recent in August. There have also been several other house fires that while smaller, resulted in significant damage from smoke and water and a loss of personal property. Thanks to the excellent response of our local fire departments, the fires were largely contained and did not spread to adjacent properties. Fortunately, the fires did not result in a loss of life or significant physical injuries. These incidents are devastating for the families who own and occupy the houses and to their neighbours who witness the destruction. They also put our first responders at risk.

We have a tendency to become complacent and take for granted that a fire could not happen in our own homes. The causes of fires are varied and often times innocent. Carelessness with cooking, smoking, space heaters, fire places, portable gas grills and candles are just a few. Other causes are electrical malfunctions or the improper use of household appliances and extension cords, notably with Christmas tree lights. Occasionally fires are related to improperly installed house wiring and HVAC systems. These can be avoided by obtaining building permits as required by Westtown Township. Building permits can ensure that

electrical work is properly designed according to uniform construction codes, then inspected by the township to verify the work was completed in accordance with the approved design. Obtaining permits and inspections are priceless inconveniences to prevent a destructive house fire.

As with many things, there is a wealth of information about fire prevention online. The American Red Cross ([redcross.org](http://redcross.org)) and National Fire Protection Association ([nfp.org](http://nfp.org)) have excellent websites that provide tips on fire prevention. They also have valuable information on fire and life safety for the home that will aid in being alerted to, fighting and escaping a fire. Visiting these websites compelled me to reevaluate the fire safety of my own home. I urge you to visit them as well.

I hope everyone enjoys the respite from the summer heat and the bounty of the fall season. As always, please stop in at the township building for a visit. I welcome the opportunity to meet you, hear your concerns, and answer any questions about Westtown Township.

Best regards,

*Rob Pingar*

Rob Pingar, Township Manager

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# Westtown Township, County of Chester

## Commonwealth of Pennsylvania



**Board of Supervisors:** Carol De Wolf, Tom Haws, Mike Di Domenico

Street Address: 1039 Wilmington Pike • West Chester, Pennsylvania 19382

Mailing Address: P.O. Box 79 • Westtown, PA 19395-0079

Phone: 610-692-1930 • Fax: 610-692-9651 • [www.westtownpa.org](http://www.westtownpa.org)

### CHESTER COUNTY USEFUL CONTACTS & PHONE NUMBERS

#### Chester County Government Services Center:

- 601 Westtown Road, West Chester, PA, 19382
- Information: 610-344-6000
- Children, Youth & Families: 610-344-5800
- Department of Emergency Services: 610-344-5000
- Health Department: 610-344-6225
  - Septic Systems: 610-344-6126
  - Recycling/Hazardous Waste: 610-344-6692
- License Bureau (Dog, Fishing, Hunting): 610-344-6370
- Marriage License Bureau: 610-344-6335
- Office of the Aging: 610-344-6009
- Passports: 610-344-6050
- Recorder of Deeds: 610-344-6330
- Tax Assessment: 610-344-6105
- Tax Claim/Lien Bureau: 610-344-6360
- Voters Services: 610-344-6410

#### Chester County Court House:

313 W. Market Street, West Chester Borough

#### District Justice for Westtown:

William Kraut (District Court 15-2-03): 610-436-5757

#### Chester County Conservation District:

610-696-5126

#### West Chester Area School District:

829 Paoli Pike West Chester, PA, 19380  
Main Number: 484-266-1000 / School Tax: 484-266-1035

#### State Senate - 9th District:

Local: 610-358-5183 / State: 717-787-4712

#### State House - 156th District:

Dan Truitt: Local: 610-696-4990 / State: 717-260-6164  
Email: [dtruitt@pahousegop.com](mailto:dtruitt@pahousegop.com)

#### U. S. Senators:

Pat Toomey: Local: 215-241-1090 / Federal: 202-224-4254  
[www.toomey.senate.gov](http://www.toomey.senate.gov)  
Robert Casey: Local: 215-405-9660 / Federal: 202-224-6324  
[www.casey.senate.gov](http://www.casey.senate.gov)

#### Congress - 6th District:

Ryan Costello: Local: 610-696-2982 / Federal: 202-225-4315  
[www.costello.house.gov](http://www.costello.house.gov)

For Police, Fire, & Medical EMERGENCIES, DIAL 911.  
For NON-EMERGENCIES, dial 610-692-5100.

### BULLETIN BOARD

#### Taylor Family Revolutionary War Memorial, Pennsylvania Militia Veterans of Westtown

At their October 3, 2016 meeting, the Board of Supervisors and Westtown Historical Commission received comments from residents of the Pleasant Grove development about the historical markers recently installed in Township open space in Pleasant Grove honoring five Pennsylvania Militia Revolutionary War Veterans of Westtown who lived and drilled at the Col. Thomas Taylor family farm which now comprises Pleasant Grove. In response to resident concerns, the Supervisors have decided to relocate the markers. The removal will be completed as soon possible. We ask for everyone's patience while the Township arranges for them to be moved to a suitable location elsewhere in the Township.

#### Phase IV On-Lot System Inspections Due

Residents in Phase IV of the On-Lot Sewage Management Program are required to have their initial system inspection paperwork submitted to the Township by December 7, 2016. Please refer to the On-Lot Sewage Management Program Guide on the township website for more information.

#### On Lot Septic System Pumping Due

All on lot septic systems must be pumped every three years. If you have already had your system pumped, please submit a copy of your receipt to the Township or email it to [tdecaro@westtown.org](mailto:tdecaro@westtown.org).

#### Stay Informed

To receive information about meetings, special events, and public service announcements via email, please go to the Township website and click on the blue Get Email Alerts button at the top of any page.

#### Ready Chesco Alerts

To sign up for Chester County's electronic notification system for emergency information go to [www.readychesco.org](http://www.readychesco.org).

#### Pay Sewer and Trash Bills Online

Westtown residents can use Visa, Master Card, and Discover to pay their utility bills online at [www.westtownpa.org](http://www.westtownpa.org). There is no fee for this service.

#### Save paper!

If you would like to receive the *Westtown Gazette* electronically, send an email to [info@westtown.org](mailto:info@westtown.org) and request to be put on the electronic delivery list.

# Friends of Oakbourne News

by Tom Bare, President of Friends of Oakbourne

While Spring started off this year with good amounts of rain, the Summer has turned somewhat brutal with limited moisture and some extreme heat. The dry conditions stress all trees and plants, especially those that have just been planted this Spring and Summer. A number of trees at my home and at Oakbourne have already (9/8/16) started to shed some dried leaves, especially the sycamores and oaks. The Friends of Oakbourne (FoO) have been watering (twice a week during this dry weather) all of the trees (a Japanese Maple at the water tower and a dawn redwood memorial tree) that were newly planted in the park in the Spring as well as two recently planted replacement trees.

The township just replaced a snow fountain weeping cherry tree in the cherry tree grove along South Concord Road that died of unknown causes. Also, FoO replaced a previously dedicated black tupelo (*Nyssa sylvatica* 'Wildfire') tree that was severely damaged by deer (described in the previous issue of the *Westtown Gazette*). Thanks to Mary Yeager and her pickup truck for transporting this 13 foot tall tree from the nursery to Oakbourne. The black tupelo has been planted, staked, and mulched; the trunk has been protected from

Oakbourne's deer herd by fencing which will keep the bucks from rubbing their antlers on the trunk and stripping the bark, which caused the demise of the original tree. The black tupelo is a native tree that can reach 60 feet in height; leaves that emerge on new growth in the Spring have a reddish hue that contrasts with the deep green leaves on old growth. The leaves turn a spectacular red and orange in the Fall.

And finally, FoO would like to acknowledge the hard and diligent work of township employee and park caretaker Jon Pennington who spent much time this Spring and Summer skillfully pruning many of the trees and shrubs in the park. Pruning is very important in maintaining the health and vigor of plants by eliminating dead wood and structural weaknesses and by decreasing the risk of infectious diseases; pruning also improves the natural appearance of the plant and can enhance ornamental features such as foliage and flowers. While the casual park user may not notice Jon's handiwork, to those of us who are familiar with the park's plantings, there has been a marked improvement in the appearance and integrity of Oakbourne's shrubs and trees. Thanks, Jon!



Black Tupelo (*Nyssa sylvatica* 'Wildfire').



Jon Pennington in front of some of his pruning work.

## Interested in improving your beautiful township park?

Please join us at the Friends of Oakbourne's upcoming meetings on July 21 and October 20, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. at Oakbourne Mansion. If you are interested in donating a park bench or tree to be planted in Oakbourne Park to honor a special person or loved one or to commemorate an important occasion, contact Tom Bare ([tmbare@hotmail.com](mailto:tmbare@hotmail.com) or 610-399-1572).

# A Westtown Love Story

by *Dave Walter, Westtown Township Historical Commissioner*

Now and then, an historian will uncover a true story that is far more fantastically improbable than any novel or Hollywood screen play. One such story surfaced in researching Camp Elder, the Union paroled P.O.W. camp situated in Westtown after the Battle of Gettysburg.

Thomas Nolan was born in Ireland circa 1832. As a young man he emigrated to America, the promised land for generations of Irish seeking to improve their lives. The 1860 Federal census lists several men with that name, and the approximate birthday, living in Ohio and working as day laborers. In any case, our Thomas Nolan enlisted in the Union Army's 25th Ohio Infantry regiment, Company F, in Steubenville, on June 13, 1861 for a three-year term of service.

After Union forces lost at First Bull Run, it was obvious the Confederates would not be defeated in 90 days. The 25th Ohio went through four weeks training at Camp Chase, in Columbus, and was sent - 1,000 strong - to the fighting front in what became West Virginia. The 25th saw combat all through 1862 and 1863. They were assigned to the Army of Virginia chasing Stonewall Jackson and getting beat at such battles as Cross Keys, Cedar Mountain, Second Bull Run, and Chancellorsville.

Thoroughly battle-hardened, Nolan, now a Corporal, was one of less than 300 men left in the 25th when it joined the pursuit of Gen. Lee's invasion of Pennsylvania in June 1863. Now assigned to Gen. O.O. Howard's XI Corps, the 25th were among the first Union soldiers to confront Lee north of Gettysburg on July 1st. Fighting alongside their buddies in the 75th Ohio, they could not stand against overwhelming odds. After a fierce defense, they were overrun. Their monument on the Gettysburg battlefield tells the story: Out of 220 men in action, 16 were killed, 96 wounded, and 71 missing. Corporal Thomas Nolan was one of the 15 missing and captured from Company F.

Fortunately for him, when the battle ended in Lee's defeat, Lee could not transport all 6,000 of his prisoners back to

Virginia. Nolan, and almost 2,000 other Union soldiers, were offered paroles: that is, they could not fight again until formally exchanged for Confederate prisoners held by the Union Army. Such parolees were kept, under guard, by their own side, in parole camps.

The parolees were marched to Harrisburg then carried by train to West Chester where the Union had established a parole camp on the Westtown farm of Enoch Williams, along what is now Goose Creek and the West Chester & Philadelphia Rail Road.

Here the 1,861 paroled prisoners camped for seven weeks. With not much to do, some prisoners were allowed to work, for pay, with neighboring farmers. The fruit crops and wheat were ready for harvest, and many farmers needed help. Their usual farm hands were off fighting too; many had joined Chester County's 97th Pennsylvania Infantry.

Thomas Nolan, seeking to supplement his meager Army pay, answered farmer Anthony Kirk's call for laborers. Kirk, 39, and his wife, Ellen Harington Kirk, 30, farmed 27 acres just off Little Shiloh Road. It had been their land since 1853, having been divided several times since Joseph Shippen (Uncle of Peggy Shippen, Benedict Arnold's wife!) bought the property in 1792. According to the 1860 census, the Kirks had three children, Catharine 9, John 6, and Anthony 2. Mrs. Kirk was pregnant with James.

One can imagine the shock when Nolan showed up at the Kirk farm to apply for the job: Mrs. Ellen Kirk was the girl Nolan had courted back when they both lived in Ireland!!

By September 7th, Thomas Nolan was on his way back to the 25th Ohio, after the War Department had ruled all the paroles were invalid. Camp Elder shut down. Then, on December 31, 1863, Anthony Kirk, age 43, suddenly passed away. He was buried in St. Agnes Cemetery, West Chester; his tombstone reads "IHS Erected by Ellen Kirk in memory of her husband, Anthony."

How fast did the widow, Ellen, notify Thomas? We can speculate it was quickly, because in January 1864, Thomas Nolan refused to join the majority of the 25th in re-enlisting for the war's duration. Those who did re-enlist, got to go home to Ohio on leave. Thomas, and the other refusers, were transferred to the 75th Ohio on January 16th to serve out the remainder of their three-year enlistment. On July 16, 1864, Corporal Nolan was mustered out.

He soon returned to Westtown because, as was later reported in the newspaper, he had "met a widow lady whom he had courted years before in Ireland. Their old love and affection for each other returned, and in due time the blue was exchanged for the more unostentatious garb of a farmer, and the two who had never met since their parting in the old country were married." We don't know the marriage date, but we know from the 1870 Census that they already had 2 children: Mary, 3, Ellen, 1. Lizzie would follow in 1872, and Annie in 1874.

Happily they lived and worked their Westtown farm until 1885 when Thomas, age 52, died on January 25th. The newspaper noted that he "was a useful and prominent citizen of (Westtown). He was highly respected by his neighbors as a man who possessed many excellent traits of character which rendered his example well worthy of imitation." He was buried in Oaklands Cemetery, West Chester.

Within three months, Ellen sold the farm to Catharine McMahan, who may have been her oldest daughter. Tragedy again entered Ellen's life; her son, Anthony, Jr., a carpenter by trade, was killed on Sept. 25, 1886 when he fell four stories from a house he was building in Atlantic City.

Ellen Kirk died in 1915, in Philadelphia, and their last child died in 1959. Their farmhouse, much expanded and modernized, still stands on Shippen Lane off Centre School Way, testimony to an improbable coincidence that brought the path of two Irish lovers together in Westtown.



*Kirk/Nolan farmhouse on Shippen Lane, 2015. Photo by Jim Guterl.*

# Westtown Day

## September 17, 2016

Local residents enjoyed a day of fun and education at Oakbourne Park. The event included historical presentations, Civil War re-enactors, tours of the Oakbourne Mansion, as well as live music, food, and games. A highlight of the day was the presentation of Historical Preservation Awards:

**Landmark Building** - Oakbourne Water Tower  
*accepted by Mark Gross, Director of Public Works*

**Historic Stewardship** - Westtown School  
*accepted by Margaret Haviland, Asst. Head of Faculty*

**Presidential Award** - Stonewalled Farmstead  
*accepted by Diane & Bill Chesko, owners*

*Thanks to the Historical and Parks & Recreation Commissioners, township staff, generous sponsors, and volunteers who made this inaugural event a huge success!*





# News from the Public Works Department

It was a busy summer for the township Public Works Department. The road crew prepped for the annual road maintenance work, removing encroaching vegetation, repairing stormwater inlets, and replacing manhole frames and lid assemblies. Allan Myers, L.P. did the repaving this year, repairing and resurfacing approximately 5 miles of township roads. The contractor provided quality work with minimal disruption to residents.



*Milling on Garden Circle.*



*Bush hog on E. Pleasant Grove Road.*



*Top coating on Dunvegan Road.*



*Dunvegan Road Culvert endwall failure.*



*Headwall installation.*

In addition to the annual Road Maintenance project, Public Works assisted with the replacement of the Dunvegan Road culvert. The culvert carries Dunvegan Roan across a tributary to Radley Run. This project involved opening Dunvegan Road and rerouting the stream prior to the removal of deteriorated twin 36" corrugated metal pipes, and stone retaining walls that were severely fractured and separated. The culvert was replaced with 42" reinforced concrete pipe and new concrete head and endwalls. Despite initial delays caused by the headwall fabrication, DiRocco Brothers, Inc. of West Chester was able to finish the project before school started. Approximately 600' of Dunvegan Road was also resurfaced.



*Endwall installation.*



*Completed headwall.*



*The Public Works Department would like to thank all residents who were affected during our road paving and culvert replacement projects for your patience and cooperation.*

# Township Meetings and Events

## OCTOBER, 2016

- 1 - Yard Waste Collection
- 3, 17 - Board of Supervisors
- 5, 19 - Planning Commission
- 11 - Parks & Recreation
- 20 - Historical Commission
- 20 - Friends of Oakbourne
- 27 - Comp Plan Update Task Force

## NOVEMBER, 2016

- 5, 19 - Yard Waste Collection
- 7, 21 - Board of Supervisors
- 8 - Parks & Recreation
- 9 - Comp Plan Update Task Force
- 9, 23 - Planning Commission
- 17 - Historical Commission

## DECEMBER, 2016

- 3 - Yard Waste Collection
- 4 - Holiday Festival @ Oakbourne
- 5, 19 - Board of Supervisors
- 7, 21 - Planning Commission
- 13 - Parks & Recreation
- 15 - Historical Commission
- 22 - Comp Plan Update Task Force

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS** - 7:30 p.m.

**HISTORICAL COMMISSION** - 6:00 p.m.

**PLANNING COMMISSION** - 7:30 p.m.

Township Municipal Building  
1039 Wilmington Pike, Westtown

**FRIENDS OF OAKBOURNE** - 7:00 p.m.

**PARKS AND RECREATION** - 7:00 p.m.

Oakbourne Mansion  
1014 S. Concord Road, Westtown

*Township Offices will be closed:  
Thanksgiving Day and the Friday after,  
and December 23 & 26.*

# P&R Winter Festival at Oakbourne Park

The Parks and Recreation Commission is pleased to host

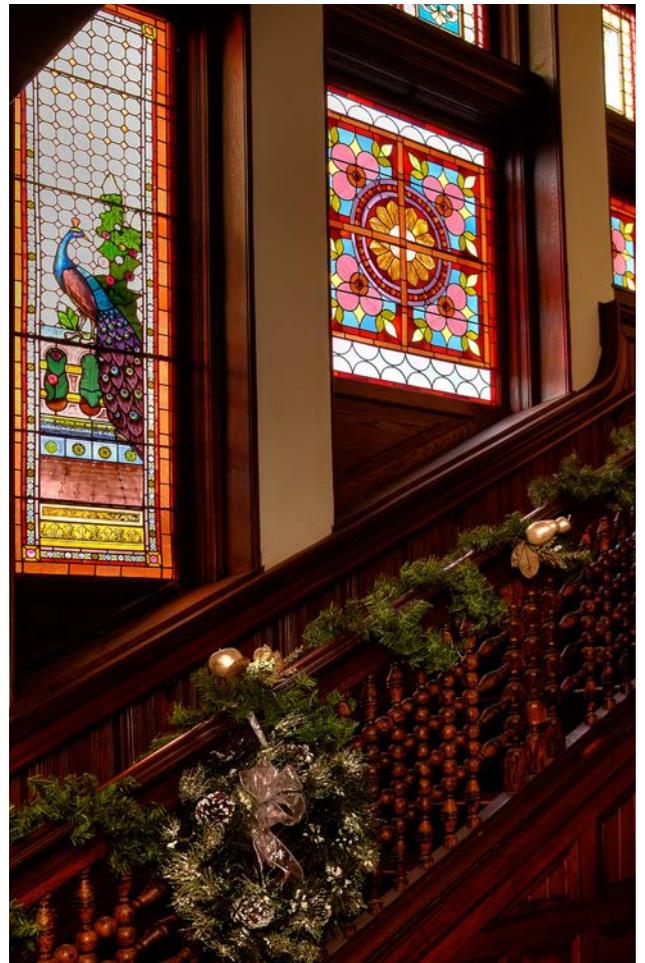
## The annual *Winter Festival*

Sunday, December 4, 2016

10:00 A.M. - 1:00 P.M.

Come see the beautiful Oakbourne Mansion  
all decked out for the holidays.

Enjoy holiday music, crafts, games, and refreshments.



Oakbourne Mansion  
1014 S. Concord Road | Westtown, PA

# 2016 Trash and Recycling Information

## How To Prepare Items For Recycling:

**Glass, plastic (#1-7), aluminum, and metal recyclables** should be rinsed. This reduces the likelihood of attracting mice, rats, birds, insects, and other pests. All lids should be removed and discarded, as they are too small to make it through the sorting process. Cans and plastic may be flattened. \*Plastic bags can be recycled at your local grocery store. Please do not put them in your recycling bin as they get tangled in the conveyors at the recycling plant.

**Mixed paper** must be in a paper bag, separate bin, or bundled and tied. **DO NOT COMINGLE LOOSELY** with other recyclables, or your recycling will not be collected.

**Corrugated cardboard boxes** must be flattened and cut into approximately 3-4 foot squares, tied, and placed beside the recycling bin. This is necessary because of the compacting system of the recycling truck.

### ACCEPTED

Aluminum cans, pie plates, and clean foil

Metal food, beverage, and aerosol cans

Green, brown, blue, clear glass bottles and jars

Mixed paper - magazines, newspapers, junk mail, paperback books, phone books, box board (cereal, crackers, toilet paper rolls, etc.), paper egg cartons, clean pizza boxes

Milk, juice, and broth cartons

Plastic bottles and jars (#1-7) recycling plant.

### NOT ACCEPTED

Oil or antifreeze cans or bottles, aluminum cookware, aluminum siding

Paint cans, metal cookware

Window glass, drinking glasses, ceramics, flower pots, mirrors, light bulbs, ovenware

Tissues, paper towels, napkins, metallic wrapping paper, dirty paper plates/cups

Juice pouches

Styrofoam, plastic bags, Tyvek envelopes, plastic toys

## General Trash Information

### Holiday Pickup Schedule:

Trash will not be collected on New Year's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. For **Monday pickups**, trash and recycling will be collected the **Saturday before** the holiday; **Thursday pickups** will be collected the **Saturday after** the holiday.

### Household Hazardous and Electronic Waste Collection:

Pennsylvania law prohibits the disposal of hazardous waste or E-waste in the regular trash. Visit [www.chestercountyswa.org](http://www.chestercountyswa.org) for hazardous waste collection events scheduled throughout the county.

Tube TV's, computer monitors, appliances, and other electronics can be disposed of at the Lanchester Landfill for FREE through the end of the year (7224 Division Highway, Narvon, PA 17555). Residents can bring up to 3 items per day. Retailers and e-waste collection events are now charging for TVs and computer monitors, so take advantage of this service!

### Bulk Items:

Large items will be taken on the last collection date of the month. You may put out 3 large items, such as appliances (without Freon) and furniture. **Construction debris (shingles, drywall, lumber, etc.) will not be collected.** If you are not sure about the disposal of a bulk item please contact the Township.

### Yard Waste:

Collected on scheduled days. Must be in paper bags or a container that can be dumped. Branches no more than 3" in diameter & 3' in length must be bundled & tied. Yard waste collection dates are posted on the Township website [www.westtownpa.org](http://www.westtownpa.org), in the Gazette, and on your utility bills. Pickup reminders are emailed to residents who subscribe to the township listserv. Join on the website.





Westtown Township  
1039 Wilmington Pike  
P.O. Box 79  
Westtown, Pennsylvania 19395

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Permit No 10



## Fall Tips

**September:** Renovate or overseed your lawn; use slow-release fertilizer

- Labor Day signals the best time of year to renovate your lawn. Core aerate, then overseed a closely mowed lawn with a fine fescue grass seed mixture and spread a slow-acting, organic fertilizer. Fine fescues require less fertilizer and water. Slow-release fertilizers are less water soluble and therefore less polluting to streams. Less compacted soils absorb more rainwater.

**October:** Plant trees in your yard and community

- Fall is the best time for planting most trees and shrubs. The more trees and shrubs on your property, the more stormwater is controlled in your community. Consider volunteering to plant trees in your community with your tree commission, watershed association, or other conservation organization.
- Leave faded blossoms on perennials to mature into seedheads to support birds and other wildlife over the winter.
- Spread lime if the soil test indicates soil is too acidic for turf grass.

**November:** Harvest fallen leaves

- Start a compost pile with fallen leaves. Mix in non-meat kitchen scraps or other “green”

organic matter. Compost can be used next year to condition your soil so that it can absorb more rain water. Purchase a compost bin and attend a composting workshop hosted by your County Solid Waste Authority, Master Gardeners, or Pennsylvania Resources Council. Mow last, light leaf fall with a mulching mower and leave the fragments in the lawn as mulch for grass plants.



- Fertilize late fall with a slow-release, organic fertilizer to encourage root development, which will create a healthier, more resilient lawn next year.

**December:** Winterize rain barrel; relax

- Take a well-earned break from yard work. Disconnect hoses from your rain barrel and store hoses to avoid damage from freezing. As the wintry mix of snow and rain events come along, monitor the melt runoff and see where more improvements might be made next year to keep the water on the property. Your neighbors will thank you and your community will benefit from reduced flooding, safer water, cleaner streams and a healthier environment.

Sources: Philadelphia Water Department; PA DEP publication "It's OK, to Let it Lay"; Penn State College of Agricultural Sciences; USDA Forest Service. This brochure was created by CRC Watersheds Association for its municipal MS4 stormwater partners.

**Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association**  
Ridley Creek State Park, 1023 Sycamore Mills Rd.  
Media, PA 19063

**Phone:** 610-892-8731 • **E-mail:** [crc@nmi.com](mailto:crc@nmi.com)  
[www.crcwatersheds.org](http://www.crcwatersheds.org)