

“Protecting Water Quality Important for All”

by Sue Meyer

Water is essential for human life. It is a commodity that is shared by all living organisms and vegetation. Adequate, safe water supply is a global issue as well as a local concern here in the Marshfield area. Our municipal wells are tapped from ground water in fragile bedrock aquifers in and around the city. Chemicals, petroleum products and agricultural run off can leach into our storm water and ground water. Since the 1930's, when manmade chemical substances started to be developed, we are seeing molecules in our water system that can be harmful. When certain contaminants become part of our body some may be retained. The more contaminants that accumulate the greater the health risks. These chemicals can effect brain, nerve function and reproduction as well as cause diseases such as cancers. With each generation there are more and more manmade chemicals found in fetal cord blood. Learning about water protection and conserving our water supply is a responsibility we all share.

- Marshfield has been recognized nationally for being one of the first permanent Pharmaceutical take back programs. The practice of discarding unused medications into the sink or toilet is to be avoided as the molecules can end up in our drinking water. Unused, outdated medication products can be disposed of at the Marshfield Police Department lobby, Monday through Friday from 7:30am until 4:30 pm.
- Studies of Lawn chemicals have shown that when using 'weed (poison) and feed' 35% goes into the plant the rest is carried off into air and runoff water. Canada has banned selling these chemicals due to their associated with ADHA, autism, cancer, hormonal changes in humans as well as effecting insects, aquatic life. Alternative "Greenscaping" your lawn and garden will avoid using such toxins and reduce water use. Compost and mulch improves soil and is a means of organic lawn and garden maintenance. (www.epa.gov/greenskapes). Square foot gardening is a way to conserve space and water while growing vegetables efficiently as was demonstrated at the Growing Together Community garden this summer.
- Save the dates of May 7 and 8 when Clean Sweep collection of hazardous waste (fertilizers, pesticides, solvents etc) will be available in Marshfield.
- Be aware of the ingredients in the products you buy as you would the food you eat. Purchase 'green' cleaning products or making your own is safer and more cost effective.
- Water conservation measures include taking shorter showers, shut off water when brushing teeth, efficient dishwashing, and reuse of graywater. For more tips, information regarding water saving devices and "Fix a Leak Week" check out www.epa.gov/watersense.
- Consider a rain barrel to collect rain water for garden use. Again Marshfield High School FFA will be selling them as a community project.

- Attend the Cultural Fair on Saturday, February 27 at the UW-Marshfield Campus. The Sustainable Committee will be focusing on water issues, rain barrels can be ordered and sign up for a Community garden plot.
- Groundwater Guardians will be sponsoring a Water Festival on Saturday, April 24th at MSTC.
- Take advantage of these learning opportunities that are available to our community and promote water wellness.

Sue Meyer is a member of Sustainable Marshfield Committee and works as a Nurse.