

Earth Day 2023

Community and Canal Clean Up Checklist for Property Owners

As part of Earth Day in South Bethany, we are encouraging homeowners to help clean up our canals and do a little yard maintenance that will help protect water quality.

As you know, runoff from our properties and roads/parking lots is the main source of pollution in our canal system. It is the source of most of the nutrients that feed the algae (that we all despise!) and deplete dissolved oxygen levels. Here's a checklist for you to help you in the process.

1. **Make sure nothing from your property drains directly into the canals.** This includes house drains, showers, and downspouts. Plug any old drainpipes that are in your bulkheads.
2. **Redirect your downspouts** to areas where they can soak into the ground.
3. **Inspect your bulkheads** and repair any damage to minimize the amount of silt going into the water.
4. **Check the canal** by your house and see if there is any debris in the canal within reach. Please pick up and discard any debris that can be removed safely.
5. If you have time, walk down to the canal end, and check for debris. If you see debris and can't get it out, send an email to the Town (administrator@southbethany.org) and let them know about it.
6. When adding new plants to your garden, **use as many native plants as possible.** [Attend the May 2, 2023 program at Town Hall about the whys and hows of using natives.]
7. If you trim trees or bushes, please pick up any branches that fall into the water.
8. Mow grass and blow or sweep clippings and debris away from the canals.
9. **Reduce or eliminate your use of fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides.** If you must fertilize, use compost or natural organic fertilizers. Never fertilize within 50 feet of the canals. Fall is the most effective season for fertilizing in our area. Spring fertilizing might cause short-term growth, but this will ultimately deplete your grass' energy and make it less likely to survive the summer.
10. **Pull weeds instead of spraying.** If you must spray, try a non-toxic option.
11. **Avoid putting ANYTHING into the canals** including food waste, fish cleaning scraps and pet waste. Pet waste releases bacteria and is harmful to aquatic life.
12. **Talk to your neighbors** and say "hi" after a long time away from South Bethany. Share this list with them!
13. Download "Protecting the Inland Bays," a publication from the Delaware Center for Inland Bays, that provides additional suggestions on how to protect our canals.
<https://www.inlandbays.org/get-involved/property-guidebook>