

Amazing Soil...

Working with Nature

The soil under our feet, the air we breathe and the water we drink are all natural resources.

These resources allow us to live. They also allow animals and plants to live. The way we, other animals and plants interact with soil, water and air is an ecosystem. When one part of the ecosystem is damaged or changed it affects other parts of the ecosystem. If soil is eroded from a field the field may not produce as much corn or soybean. Eroded soil may end up in a stream and cause problems for fish. Building a house where animals once lived will cause them to need to find a new home and new food sources.

Conservation involves protecting and improving our natural resources. Farmers use less tillage to keep soil on the land and our streams clear. Landowners find ways to improve habitat (where an animal lives) for deer, turkey and quail. Planting trees, warm season

grasses and leaving

strips of crops standing in the field unharvested all provide better habitat for wildlife. Finding ways to reduce our water use saves water for another day.

This is interesting:

-  Missouri farmers reduced soil erosion from almost 11 tons per acre to just over 5 tons per acre from 1982 to 2002
-  About 75 percent of the water used in the house is used in the bathroom
-  Only about 1 percent of the water in the world is fresh water not in polar ice caps and glaciers
-  Quail numbers are increasing in Missouri due to improvements in habitat provided by landowners

Fun to do:

You can be a conservationist in and around your home. Encourage your family to reduce their water usage by running the dishwasher only when it is full. Don't leave the water running when brushing your teeth or when Dad is shaving. Outdoors you can save water by watering in the early morning and reducing the water that can evaporate. If you allow your lawn grasses to grow taller they will have a better root system and not need as much irrigation. You can also conserve electricity by turning off lights and electronics (like televisions and game systems) when no one's in the room.

To learn more about gardening,

visit:

www.extension.missouri.edu/lawn-garden

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Missouri Press
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