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NEWSLETTER



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## WHAT'S IN OUR RIVER?

**The Peckman River** starts in the Eagle Rock Reservation in West Orange and flows through Verona, Cedar Grove, and Little Falls before joining the Passaic River in Woodland Park. Understanding its path helps us see how pollution can travel and affect broader areas, making local action even more important.

As winter melts away and spring begins to bloom, you might have noticed something not-so-pretty along the banks of the Peckman River—trash. A clean and healthy river isn't just about keeping our town looking nice; it's crucial for our local wildlife, soil, and water quality.

When waste and pollutants find their way into the Peckman River, the impact is more than just an eyesore:

- **Harm to Wildlife**: Trash and chemicals in the water can hurt animals and disrupt their habitats. Birds, fish, and other creatures can get tangled in debris or ingest harmful pollutants.
- **Soil and Water Contamination**: Polluted water can seep into the ground, affecting the quality of our soil, our drinking water and plant life.
- **Community Impact**: A polluted river can lead to problems like increased flooding, reduced recreational opportunities, and a loss of natural beauty in our town.

## **What Are the Worst Offenders in River Pollution?**

Certain pollutants are particularly harmful to rivers and bodies of water like the Peckman. These can include:

- **Heavy Metals**: Toxic substances like lead and mercury can poison both wildlife and humans.



- **Industrial Chemicals and Pesticides**: Runoff from nearby areas can introduce dangerous chemicals that can damage or even destroy ecosystems.

- **Excess Nutrients**: Fertilizers and other nutrient-rich substances can cause algal blooms, which deplete oxygen in the water and harm aquatic life.

- **Toxic Chemicals**: These can come from household products or industrial waste and pose a risk to both wildlife and human health.

- **Non-Biodegradable Waste**: Plastics and other long-lasting materials can harm animals and damage the river's natural ecosystem.

- **Excess Sediment**: Sediment from erosion or construction can cloud the water, blocking sunlight and making it difficult for aquatic plants and animals to thrive.

## **How You Can Make The Difference:**

- **Join our Peckman River Clean-Ups**: We're always planning community clean-up events, and we'd love your help! Picking up trash and debris along the river is a hands-on way to make a big impact in our community and on our planet!

- **Report Pollution**: If you spot litter or pollutants entering the river, inform Verona's Department of Public Works, or the Township Administration. Quick action today can prevent bigger problems tomorrow.

- **Practice Responsible Waste Disposal**: Dispose of trash and chemicals properly. Do not dump anything into storm drains, as they lead directly into rivers and other bodies of water.

With your help the Peckman River can remain a beautiful and healthy part of our community and ecosystem.



# CELEBRATE EARTH DAY THROUGHOUT APRIL

## • NATIVE PLANT PRESENTATION

**Wednesday April 2, 2025: 6:30-7:30 p.m.**

Join the VEC at the [Verona Public Library](#) for a presentation "How to Get Started with Native Plants". The event welcomes presenter Deb Ellis, Founder of the Essex Chapter of the [Native Plant Society of New Jersey](#). Deb, a Master Gardener and a Rutgers Environmental Steward, will discuss low-maintenance, deer resistant and gorgeous native perennials and shrubs for beautifying your property.



**Deb Ellis**

## • NATIVE PLANT SALE

**Friday, April 11 and Saturday, April 26, 2025**



**BEE BALM**

The VEC, in partnership with [Hillcrest Farms](#), is holding its inaugural Day Native Plant Sale. The sale features perennials and shrubs at wholesale prices. All plants are native to New Jersey, and have moderate to high deer resistance to offer long-lasting and environmentally friendly beauty. Orders are due by April 11, 2025 and plants must be picked up **on Saturday, April 26, 2025** from 9 am- 12 pm at Hillcrest Farms and Greenhouse: 377 Bloomfield Avenue Verona.

**Download order form with all information here: [NATIVE PLANT SALE](#).**

## • VERONA PARK CONSERVANCY CLEAN UP

**April 26, 2025, 9am-11am (Rain Date: May 3, 2025)**

Before or after you pick up your plants, make sure to stop by the [Verona Park Conservancy's Spring Clean-up](#). Sign in near the Boathouse at Verona Park.

## The 2025 VEC 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Poster Contest

The VEC's annual 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Poster Contest entries have been received and they're amazing. The VEC and the Verona Town Council will be awarding the winners from each of Verona's elementary schools at their meeting on **May 5<sup>th</sup>** at 7p.m. in Council Chambers.

## Test your stream savvy with our latest environmental quiz

Hello, Verona families! With spring approaching, we all want our yards to look beautiful. But did you know how lawn care choices affect streams and rivers? The health of small waterways like our mighty Peckman river doesn't get talked about enough, so we're showing the downstream effects of yardwork with our quiz on the following page.



## Waterway Quiz

**1. Which is a major source of pollution for New Jersey waterways?**

- A) Litter from parks
- B) Excess fertilizers from lawns
- C) Plastic bottles

**2. Why is it important to keep fertilizers out of streams?**

- A) They make the water smell stinky!
- B) They can cause harmful algal blooms that harm aquatic life
- C) They help fish grow bigger

**3. How can you prevent fertilizers from washing into local streams?**

- A) Apply them before it rains
- B) Use them only on bare soil
- C) Follow the recommended application rates and timing

**4. What should you do with pet waste to protect our streams?**

- A) Leave it on the ground
- B) Flush it down the toilet
- C) Dispose of it in the trash

**5. Riparian buffers are vegetated areas alongside bodies of water. What makes them so important?**

- A) They're super pretty.
- B) They help filter pollutants and reduce runoff
- C) They prevent flooding

**6. How can families help protect streams?**

- A) Organizing stream/river clean-ups
- B) Nothing. We're doomed!
- C) Watching more content on streaming services

**7. How does excess runoff from lawns affect streams?**

- A) It keeps the water level high
- B) It can lead to increased flooding and erosion
- C) It helps lost clownfish named Nemo reunite with family members

**8. What can you plant to help keep streams healthy?**

- A) Native plants that require less water and fertilizer
- B) Exotic plants that look pretty
- C) Any plant that grows quickly

Answers on next page

## Quiz Answers:

Answer Key:

1. B- Excess fertilizers from lawns.
2. B- Fertilizers can lead to explosive growth of algae, which harms aquatic ecosystems.
3. C- Follow recommended application rates and timing.
4. C- Dispose of it in the trash.
5. B- They help filter pollutants and reduce runoff to maintain stream health.
6. A- Organizing a neighborhood stream clean-up
7. B- It can lead to increased flooding and erosion and harm stream ecosystems.
8. A- Native plants help reduce the need for chemical fertilizers and support local wildlife.



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