



# Nature Happens If You Let It!

By Nathan Eshleman, Grounds Manager

The simple splendor of the Spring Run wetland area is that nature happens if you let it! This fact is really the crux of my wetland lectures. It's hard to imagine that a tiny three-acre parcel of streamside land could be so rich and full of life, but it's true! The wetlands filter nitrates that originate from farmland and turf runoff out of the water. Plants along the meandering stream readily take up the excess nitrogen as nutrients and keep it from causing problems further downstream. The plant material also filters silt from runoff creating a natural filter. The silt then becomes prime growing medium for more plants.

By allowing the streamside plants to flourish, we've created an ideal place for wildlife. There is cover, food, and water. Common inhabitants include the red-winged blackbird, mallard ducks, herons, Canada geese, muskrats, groundhogs, hawks, owls, foxes, and occasionally other species of wildlife. The amazing thing about this is that we have preserved the natural habitat by simply not mowing the area on either side of the stream.

The streamside natural area at Spring Run also becomes an outdoor classroom. It is easy to see the courting rituals of the Canada geese one month, and a mallard duck nurturing her young the next. There are always plants of interest and many that have simply come up on their own. Yes, nature may look messy or



unkempt, but the beauty stems from the many layers of life that inhabit this small area. If we were to mow right up to the stream, all this beauty and wonder would be lost.

Finally, the wetland natural area provides a little respite from our day-to-day grind. Enjoy witnessing nature in action without having to put on your galoshes. Take time and listen to the call of the red-winged blackbird, notice the great blue heron feeding in the shallow pools, and marvel at the ever changing beauty that is the Spring Run wetlands.

I encourage you to join me on one of my walking tours to experience the magnificence that surrounds us, if we let it! Hope to see you there.


