

Keep Your Yard Maintained *and* Your Creeks Clean

Yard Maintenance Can Impact Water Quality

Lawn care, landscaping, and pest control practices can be major contributors to stormwater pollution. Rain or melting snow flows across yards, rooftops, paved areas, and soil, carrying dirt, leaves, grass clippings, garden chemicals, and anything else in its path to creeks via our streets and into storm drains.



The Impact

Nutrients and other chemicals leached from yard waste can cause excessive algae growth, fish kills, and toxin production, and they can rob the organisms that live in our streams from the oxygen they need to survive.

You Can Make a Difference

Look around your home and find the nearest storm drain – tell your neighbors that it

empties into the nearest creek!

Here are some simple things you can do to protect water quality while keeping your yard maintained.

Lawn Maintenance

- ◆ Mow your lawn often enough so no more than one-third of the length of the grass is removed.
- ◆ Either leave the grass blades on the lawn or compost.
- ◆ Sweep grass on all paved areas.
- ◆ Only spot treat for weeds or not at all.



Watering

- ◆ Do not overwater. Excessive runoff wastes both water and any chemicals you may have added to your yard.
- ◆ Think about directing downspouts to a depressed area or a garden bed so the water soaks into your yard instead of rushing out to the street.



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Fertilizing

- ◆ Fertilize only when necessary or not at all.
- ◆ Do not fertilize if you think it might rain in the next day or two.

Yard Waste

- ◆ Home [compost](#) yard waste or participate in municipal collection or [drop-off](#).

Mulch and Landscaping Materials

- ◆ Do not store mulch or landscaping materials in the street.
- ◆ Keep materials contained so that rainwater doesn't wash them into the storm drain.



Yard Design

- ◆ Consider installing a [rain garden](#) and directing your roof drains to it.
- ◆ Incorporate swales and berms to your landscape so runoff is contained and doesn't leave your yard.
- ◆ Consider using bricks, flagstone, gravel, and other porous materials instead of impervious surfaces, such as sidewalks and driveways.
- ◆ Add trees and shrubs to capture and hold rainwater before it can reach the ground.

Homeowners' Associations

- ◆ Maintain regional [Water Quality Best Management Practices](#).

Septic Systems

- ◆ [Maintain](#) your septic system by having it pumped at least every three years.

Irrigation Ditches and Creek Areas

- ◆ Keep a mowing and fertilizing buffer around ditches and creeks so that erosion and nutrient loading are minimized.

Pet Waste

- ◆ Scoop the poop and place it in the trash.

Exterior Cleaning

- ◆ Use dry cleanup methods, such as a broom and dust pan whenever possible.
- ◆ If you must use water, divert it to landscaping where it can infiltrate.



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