



Lawn and Garden Care

Ten easy tips for maintaining an attractive yard and garden while protecting water resources

Test your soil before applying fertilizer. Excess fertilizer can end up in lakes and streams where it promotes algae and plant growth. Purchase low- or no-phosphorus fertilizer and follow the application rates found on the bag.

Maintain the correct soil pH. This will improve the efficiency of nutrient absorption while saving you time and money. Use lime to adjust the pH to between 6.5 and 7.2.

Never apply fertilizer before a rainstorm. Heavy rainfall can cause fertilizer to flow into lakes and streams. Apply a slow-release fertilizer in the early spring and allowing time for gradual soil infiltration.

Mow at regular intervals. This will maintain a healthy lawn while minimizing soil erosion, nutrient loss, and excess strain on local storm sewers.

Leave the clippings on the lawn after mowing. Grass clippings return organic matter, nitrogen, phosphorus, and other nutrients to your lawn.

Conserve water. Water plants in the early morning or late afternoon to minimize evaporation and sweep your sidewalks and driveways rather than using a hose. Divert roof water to vegetated areas and wash your car on grass to promoting soil infiltration.

Cover piles of soil, sand, and mulch to prevent erosion. Wind and rain can transport this material to lakes and streams where it reduces aquatic habitat and promotes weed and algae growth.

Create a compost pile. Place compost near garden plants to recycle nutrients and organic matter, minimize soil erosion, and reduce the need for commercial fertilizer.

Limit your use of pesticides to protect humans, pets, and water resources. Carefully follow the recommended timing, frequency, and application rates on the container.

Carefully dispose of yard and household waste and automotive chemicals. Keep gardening products, pet waste, pesticides, oil, and gasoline out of the storm drains.

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