

## Protecting surface and ground water is ...

Stormwater runoff is rain water or snowmelt that doesn't soak into the ground. Instead, it flows across the land surface, absorbing and transporting pollutants such as nutrients, soil, trash, pesticides, oil, and gasoline to our lakes, streams and wetlands.

As cities and suburbs grow, an increasing percentage of the natural landscape is converted to paved surfaces that don't allow rain water and snowmelt to filter through the soil. Paved surfaces within a typical city block can generate five times more stormwater runoff than a forested area of the same size.

Stormwater transports pollution which can harm people and animals. It contributes to flooding and can lead to expensive repairs for municipalities and homeowners. Although pollution runoff from a single property may not be substantial, the combined effect of an entire neighborhood can create a significant impact on local lakes and streams.



## *everyone's responsibility!*

Across the nation, home and business owners are being encouraged to slow down, clean up, and reduce stormwater runoff from their properties in order to keep water resources healthy and attractive.

By changing landscaping practices, we can reduce stormwater runoff from our yards which will then improve water quality in nearby waterbodies. By reducing lawn and garden fertilization for example, lower levels of nutrients will flow into local lakes and streams. This will reduce the number of algae blooms, increase oxygen levels, and improve conditions for fish and wildlife.

# Lawn and Garden Care

*The best way to have a beautiful yard and garden while protecting the environment*



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# Lawn and garden tips *that protect lakes and streams*



**Plant a rain garden** to slow the rate of stormwater runoff and provide time for surface water to soak slowly into the ground. Rain gardens help to minimize pollution runoff, reduce flooding and drainage problems, and enhance the beauty of your yard.

**Use native plants** in your landscaping plan. They require less maintenance, are well adapted for this region, and rarely require pesticides and fertilizers.

**Conserve water.** Divert roof water to vegetated areas or rain barrels and use mulch to retain moisture. Water your garden in the early morning or late afternoon to minimize evaporation, and sweep your sidewalks and driveways rather than using a hose.

**Use care when applying fertilizers and never apply it before a rainstorm.** Always test your soil before applying fertilizer. The correct soil pH will improve the efficiency of nutrient absorption while saving you time and money.

**Avoid using phosphorus on your lawn.** Most soils in this area don't need it. Excess phosphorus can flow off your property and 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.

**Mow your lawn at regular intervals and keep the clippings on the lawn.** Proper mowing can promote a healthy root system while minimizing soil erosion. Grass clippings return organic matter and nutrients to the lawn.

**Cover piles of soil, sand, and mulch to prevent erosion.** Wind and rain can transport these materials to lakes and streams where they reduce aquatic habitat and promote weed and algae growth.

**Plant buffer strips along the shoreline of lakes, streams, and rivers.** Trees and bushes will slow the rate and volume of stormwater runoff, while absorbing excess nutrients and reducing soil erosion. Plant vegetation along sidewalks and parking lots to filter and slow stormwater runoff.



**Create a compost pile for your garden waste.** Place compost near garden plants to recycle nutrients and organic matter, minimize soil erosion, and reduce the need for watering and 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.** Keep all gardening products, grass clippings, leaves, pet waste, pesticides, oil, and gasoline out of the storm drains.