

Lawn and Garden Care

The best way to maintain an attractive yard and garden while protecting the environment



Never apply fertilizer before a rainstorm.

Excess fertilizer can flow off your property and end up in lakes and streams where it promotes algae and plant growth. Always test your soil before applying fertilizer. Purchase low- or no-phosphorus fertilizer and follow the application rates found on the bag. The correct soil pH will improve the efficiency of nutrient absorption while saving you time and money.

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 your lawn.

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.

Plant buffer strips along lake and stream shorelines. Trees and bushes will slow the rate and volume of stormwater runoff, while absorbing excess nutrients and reducing soil erosion.

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.

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. Native plants require less maintenance, are well adapted for this region, and rarely require pesticides and fertilizers.

Conserve water. Water your garden 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 or rain barrels and use mulch to retain water.