

# Pollution Prevention



## A Guide to Yard Waste and Lawn Care

***Lawn maintenance can make your house and yard more beautiful.  
But what we do to maintain our lawns can affect the environment around us.***

*When it rains, water flows off our yards, streets, and parking lots directly to our creeks without ever being cleaned. As it flows to storm drains, storm water can pick up anything in its path including things like oil, dirt, litter, pet waste and yard chemicals.*

### Fertilizers

*Fertilizers are essentially nutrients used by plants to live. Most fertilizers contain nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium but can contain other elements as well.*

*Just like humans, plants can only use so much food. Fertilizer not used by the plant is available to mix with rain and becomes storm water pollution.*

*Nutrients from fertilizers, such as phosphorus and nitrogen, promote algae blooms and excessive plant growth. Algae depletes oxygen making it unavailable to fish and other aquatic life. Algae blooms and excessive plants limit much needed sunlight.*

- *Apply fertilizers exactly where you want them.*
- *Improve the health of your soil by adding compost and using organic mulches.*
- *Use fertilizers sparingly.*
- *Leave grass clippings on your lawn as a natural fertilizer.*
- *Store fertilizers in areas that are covered to avoid mixing them with rain.*

### Pesticides

*When it comes to pest control, the best defense is a strong offense - building healthy soil, selecting appropriate plants, watering effectively, and using mulch. An ounce of prevention is better than a pound of pesticide.*

- *Apply pesticides exactly where you want them.*
- *Consider physical controls such as barriers, traps or handpicking instead of pesticides.*
- *Avoid spraying pesticides onto driveways or sidewalks.*
- *Store pesticides in areas that are covered to avoid mixing them with rain.*
- *Use pesticides sparingly.*
- *Avoid chemical applications when rain is forecast.*
- *Protect beneficial insects by avoiding broad-spectrum pesticides.*
- *Read pesticides labels carefully.*
- *Be sure to identify the pest plant or insect so as to purchase the correct product*