

Preventing Water Pollution

Storm Water Runoff

- Landscape your yard so that grass and trees help to retain storm water and reduce the amount of runoff from your property. Vegetation slows down runoff so that it is more likely to be absorbed into the soil.
- Inventory your yard for signs of erosion and plant bare spots with suitable grasses or groundcover.
- Place splash blocks directly beneath your downspouts to absorb some of the energy from gutter runoff and to prevent a gully from forming. To further slow the flow, attach flexible perforated plastic tubing to the end of your downspout.
- Contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District for free advice on difficult erosion and storm water problems.

Fertilizers and Pesticides

- Use synthetic fertilizers and pesticides only when necessary and follow the directions carefully. Avoid overuse and do not apply them when rain is forecasted.
- Learn how to compost and use this in place of fertilizer.
- While cutting your grass, leave the grass clippings on your lawn for a natural fertilizer and occasionally bag the clippings and use as mulch around your trees, shrubs, and flowers. Mulching is the key to a weed free garden; plus, most mulches break down over time acting as a natural fertilizer.
- Try using natural pesticides, such as putting up bat and ladybug houses or creating a mixture of dishwashing detergent, bulb of garlic, and water in a gallon jar to spray on plants.
- Avoid spreading fertilizers and pesticides on sidewalks and driveways where they can be easily washed into storm drains.
- Plant native plants because they belong in this environment and will grow well without the use of pesticides and fertilizers. They also do not need to be watered as much.

Motor Oil and Household Hazardous Products

- Buy only as much of a product as you will use. Give any surplus to friends or neighbors who might use it. Find out if your community sponsors a local hazardous waste collection day. Call your local jurisdiction to find out proper disposal procedures.
- Do not pour hazardous products down the sink or toilet. They may not be removed by the sewage treatment process and may end up in our local waterways.
- Never dump household products on the ground or in catch basins or storm drains which connect directly to local waterways.

Litter and Animal Waste

- Often litter is unintentional. Make sure your garbage can lid fits tightly. Do not place light items, such as loose newspapers, on the top of your recycling bin.
- Do not dispose of leaves or grass clippings by dumping them in or near streams or by putting them down storm drains.
- Pick up pet waste and flush down the toilet or dispose of in the trash.
- Pick up litter that blows in your yard and around your street.

Septic Systems

- Have your septic tank pumped every three years to remove accumulated sludge and scum. Perform an inspection every year to make sure your system is performing properly.
- Be careful what you flush into your system. Never dispose of toxic or hazardous chemicals in your system. These can contaminate your groundwater supply.
- Practice water conservation to avoid overloading your system and to extend its life.