



Be Stormwater SMART!

Recycle Your Lawn

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Grass clippings and bits of leaves that are blown into the street after lawn maintenance can be just as bad as other forms of litter. They clog gutters and storm drains which reduces the amount of stormwater that can move through the system. Stormwater that should move quickly may begin to back up; causing high water on roads or other, more hazardous flooding situations. Remember, it is illegal to deposit anything other than rainwater down the storm drain!

What doesn't get stuck in the storm drain ends up in the nearest stream, pond, lake or river. Nutrients derived from grass clippings, fertilizers and other natural sources fuel excessive uncontrolled growth of algae and may cause health problems, damage water quality, and negatively impacting the environment. Some types of algal blooms are toxic, making it dangerous for recreation, fish and wildlife. As algae breaks down, it uses up oxygen in the water causing fish kills and other ecological damage. Unsafe conditions may require beach closures and limit fishing and other recreational activities which can impact the local economy.



Keep grass clippings off streets and other paved areas

MAINTAINING YOUR LAWN

To maintain your lawn properly, mow high and mow often, so that you only take off about 1/3 of the length of the grass. This will result in an attractive, neatly trimmed lawn, and clippings will disappear when they filter down to the soil. To shade the soil, cool the roots, and block weed growth, most lawns should be mowed 2-3" high especially in summer.

Controlling watering rates will help your lawn grow at manageable levels and still stay healthy. Don't water until the lawn is dry. If it turns blue-green or gray, or if footprints don't spring back, it's time to water. Provide about an inch at a time for clay soils. If managed carefully, water will soak four to six inches down, just right for building healthy root systems and greener growth. Early morning watering conserves water by preventing evaporation.

Have your soil tested and apply only organic, slow-release, or water insoluble fertilizers or compost, aerate the soil, plant native grasses, spot spray weeds with herbicides and using natural pest control methods to make an even bigger difference on your lawn and in the environment.

SO WHAT SHOULD BE DONE WITH CLIPPINGS?

Leave clippings on the lawn and sweep any that fall on paved surfaces back onto the lawn where they will naturally decompose and fertilize. You can also rake or blow clippings into a compost pile. If you use a lawn maintenance company, it is your responsibility to ensure they do not blow or dump yard wastes down the storm drain inlets.

Remember – there's no treatment or filtering of stormwater between the drain on your street to the nearest body of water. Even though grass clippings, leaves, and soil are natural forms of debris, when they are put into the storm drain they can destroy the balance of our waterways. Storm drains are not garbage disposals!

