

How does Lawn & Garden Care Effect Stormwater Pollution

Storm drains and catch basins in the city streets are not connected to the sanitary sewer or wastewater treatment plant. This means whatever enters the drains goes directly untreated into our rivers and streams.

Excess fertilizers and pesticides applied to lawns and gardens wash off and pollutants enter the storm sewer system. Yard clippings and leaves blown into the streets are washed into the catch basins and add unwanted nutrients for algae and bacteria into the rivers and streams.



City of Owatonna



540 West Hills Circle
Owatonna, MN 55060-4701

Lawn & Garden Care



“Clean H₂Owatonna” is the City of Owatonna’s Stormwater Management initiative to improve the quality of our water resources and protect them from harmful pollutants.

Pesticides

The major source of pesticides to urban streams is home application of products designed to kill insects and weeds in lawns and gardens.

- Mulching can be used where turf is absent to prevent weed growth.
- Insects can be sprayed off of plants with water or vacuumed off of larger plants.
- Install fencing, netting, or tree trunk guards to prevent small animals and birds from disturbing plants.
- Use pesticides only when absolutely necessary. Use the least toxic product and always read and follow the label directions for application.



What can be done to prevent lawn care pollution problems?

There are several simple steps that can be taken to reduce the amount of pollutants associated with lawn & garden care.

- When mowing your lawn, mow so that grass clippings are blown back toward your lawn instead of into the street.
- Don't blow or rake leaves and other yard waste into the street or gutter.
- Recycle yard waste or start your own compost pile.
- Don't over irrigate. Use drip irrigation, soaker hoses or microspray system and water early in the morning.
- If you have a spray head sprinkler system, consider adjusting your watering to a "cycle and soak" method. Instead of watering for 15 minutes straight, break up the session into 5 minute intervals allowing water to soak in before the next application.
- Keep irrigation systems well maintained and water only when needed to save money and prevent over-watering.

Non-Phosphorous Fertilizers

It's the law. Phosphorus fertilizers stimulates the excess growth of algae. As the algae decays, the amount of oxygen available to fish is reduced. In response, the State of Minnesota passed the Minnesota Phosphorus Lawn Fertilizer Law that prohibits the use of fertilizers containing phosphorus. There are alternatives.

- Have your soil tested to determine the nutrients needed to maintain a healthy lawn.
- Consider using organic fertilizers that release nutrients more slowly.
- Leave mulched grass clippings on the lawn to act as a natural fertilizer.

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