

Fall Clean Water Tips

Clean Water Starts
With Clean Streets



In urban areas, stormwater carries phosphorus and other pollutants directly into Minnesota’s water resources through the storm drainage system.

Unlike our household wastewater, stormwater doesn’t go through a treatment plant first, but is dumped directly into lakes, rivers and wetlands. Common pollutants that can wash off our yards and streets include:

Phosphorus: From tree leaves, grass clippings, soil erosion, fertilizer, pet and wildlife waste

Eroding soil: From exposed soil on construction sites, sparse lawns, and unprotected garden beds set close to hard surfaces like streets, sidewalks and driveways

Bacteria: From pet and wildlife waste, failing septic systems

Toxins: Oil, paint, cleaners, etc. spilled on streets, sidewalks, and driveways or dumped down storm drains

How can you help?

1. Have a storm drain near your home? Act as its guardian angel and do your part to keep it free of litter and leaves.

2 Sweep up grass clippings and fertilizer from driveways, sidewalks and streets, and rake, mulch or compost yard waste. Don’t forget to sweep along the curb. Remove leaves from your gutters, ditches and driveways, sidewalks and streets.

3. Fall is the best season to fertilize your lawn and control common weeds. Weed and feed responsibly. Use fertilizers and pesticides only as needed

and always read and follow product instructions carefully. Be phosphorus conscious! Minnesota passed a law in 2002 that restricts the use of phosphorus-containing fertilizers. For additional information about the law and its exceptions visit the Minnesota Department of Agriculture Web site at www.mda.state.mn.us and click on the “Protecting our Lands and Waters” button.

4. Consider using alternative lawn-care techniques in addition to, or even instead of, pesticides. Try these: pulling weeds by hand (counts as a workout), or spot-treating weedy areas instead of your entire yard. More yard-care information is available under the Garden section on the University of Minnesota Extension Services’ Web site www.extension.umn.edu.

5. Resist the urge to let Fido fend for himself when the weather turns colder, and keep on scooping poop. Pet waste contains phosphorus, nitrogen and harmful bacteria.

6. During routine fall tune-ups, check your car and lawn equipment for leaks. A good rainstorm can send gasoline and oil drips from automobiles, lawnmowers and power equipment into waterways.

Courtesy of cleanwatermn.org