

Responsible Lawn Care

Pesticides and fertilizers can improve the appearance of the landscape; however, improper use of these chemicals can impair water quality. To determine which nutrients are needed, have the soil tested. Soil test kits are available at County Cooperative Extension Centers.

Follow these tips to protect water quality:

- ★ Use fertilizer and pesticides sparingly.
- ★ Keep fertilizer off of paved surfaces. Sweep it back onto the lawn.
- ★ Don't fertilize before a rainstorm.
- ★ Don't bag grass. Leave it on the lawn to reduce the need to fertilize.
- ★ Mow at the proper height. Fescue thrives at 3 inches. Mowing any closer will create favorable conditions for weeds.



Proper Disposal of Trash and Chemicals

Don't litter. Littering is one of the most unsightly forms of pollution in our local waterways, and can easily be prevented. Carry a

bag for waste along in the car to eliminate the temptation to throw it out the window. Use an ashtray for ashes and cigarette butts and properly dispose in the trash can periodically.

Proper chemical disposal is important for health and safety. Be sure to take chemicals such as paint, furniture stripper, fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, oil, car batteries and antifreeze to the local Household Hazardous Waste Collection Site for disposal.



Automotive Care and Maintenance

Mechanical Maintenance

Fluid spills and improper disposal of materials results in pollutants entering streams and lakes. Here are some ideas to protect our waterways during vehicle maintenance.



- ★ Drip pans and draining boards should be used to capture solvents and oils for proper disposal.
- ★ Use as little water as possible to clean spills, leaks and drips by using rags and dry absorbent material such as kitty litter.
- ★ Promptly take all fluids and batteries to the proper waste facility for disposal.
- ★ Do not pour waste onto the ground or into storm drains.

Cleaning

When cars are washed in driveways and parking lots, the dirty wash water finds it's way into the drainage system and ultimately into streams and lakes. Wash water contains pollutants such as: oils and grease, phosphates (from the soap), and heavy metals, all of which have negative effects on water quality.



Wash your car in the grass. The wash water will be treated by the soil and the grass will benefit from the water.

An alternative is to wash your car at a commercial car wash. There, the dirty wash water enters the sanitary sewer system where it is treated before being released back into the stream.

Pick Up After Your Pets

Animal waste contributes harmful bacteria to local waters. These bacteria can pose health risks to humans and other animals and result in the spread of disease.

When going for dog walks, take a few small bags and one large zip-lock bag. When doggie makes a deposit, turn a baggie inside out over your hand and use it like a glove to pick up the waste. Transfer it to the larger bag and drop it in the trash when you get home.



Another option is to bring a "poop-scoop" and plastic bags along and deposit waste in public garbage cans along the way.

Septic System Maintenance

Poorly maintained septic systems can harm water quality by leaking raw sewage into surface water runoff.

Signs that your system is not working properly include: wet areas or areas of lush green growth in your lawn, sewage odors, slow draining of pipes or backup of wastewater into your home, or ponding or outbreak of wastewater onto the ground surface.

Try these tips for better septic system performance:

- ★ Have your septic tank pumped every three to five years to extend the life of your system.
- ★ Don't put chemicals into your septic system. Household chemicals kill the good bacteria that help your septic system work.
- ★ Divert roof drains and runoff away from the septic system area to keep extra water out.



WORD SCRAMBLE!

Used to help plants grow, but it should never be applied just before a rainstorm.

E L F R T I I R E Z

The portion of rainfall or water from lawn sprinklers that flows across the land's surface, does not soak into the ground, and eventually runs into a larger body of water. It may pick up and carry a variety of pollutants.

F N O F U R

Any human-caused contamination of water that reduces its usefulness to humans and other organisms.

E T A R W

U P L O L I T N O

The total land area that drains runoff to a particular body of water.

H S E T R A W D E

Answers: fertilizer, runoff, water pollution, watershed

**Piedmont Triad
Water Quality
Partnership**



www.piedmontwaterquality.org

City of Archdale
(336) 431-9141

City of Greensboro
(336) 373-2812

City of High Point
(336) 883-3111

City of Randleman
(336) 495-7500

City of Winston-Salem
(336) 747-7480

Forsyth County
(336) 727-2087

Guilford County
(336) 641-3334

Piedmont Triad Regional Water Authority
(336) 547-8437

Randolph County
(336) 318-6555

Town of Jamestown
(336) 454-1138

Town of Kernersville
(336) 996-3121

Protecting Water Quality

It's Everyone's Responsibility



As water flows over land, it collects soil, pet wastes, fertilizers, pesticides, oils and other pollutants. Even if your house is not near a stream or river, the runoff will flow down the street into a ditch or storm drain that eventually empties into a stream or lake, taking soil and pollutants along with it.

By making wise decisions in your yard about lawn care and chemical disposal, you can protect our water quality. Better water quality means protected sources of drinking water and a safe environment for you and your family.

WATERSHED TRIVIA

- ★ 1600% more stormwater runoff is produced by a one-acre parking lot compared to a one-acre meadow.
- ★ A single quart of motor oil dumped down a storm sewer creates a two-acre oil slick.
- ★ On average, 10 pounds of nitrogen are discharged to ground water from a properly operating septic system per person using the system each year.
- ★ 70 million pounds of active pesticide ingredients are applied to lawns in our country each year.
- ★ Three billion fecal coliform bacteria are produced by an average sized dog dropping.
- ★ Over one million acres of land is converted to urban use in the US each year.
- ★ 27,200 gallons of water fall on a one-acre yard during a one-inch rainfall.
- ★ Recent watershed research has discovered that urban stream quality begins to sharply decline once impervious cover in a watershed, such as streets, driveways, sidewalks and rooftops, exceeds 10%.
- ★ Phosphorus, copper, zinc and fecal coliform bacteria are the most frequently found pollutants in urban stormwater runoff.

Trivia provided by the Center for Watershed Protection