

The City of Auburn

Water Pollution Control

Storm Water Series

What You Can Do: In Your Yard

It is March already. It seems like we just celebrated the New Year yesterday. With each passing day, spring gets closer. That means Mother Nature wakes up our surrounding landscape with new leaves, beautiful flowers and my neighbors' yard that looks and feels like carpet. Lets not forget the warmer weather also. I would like to say more consistent weather, but we live in Indiana. Just like the end of February, we had a 60 degree day, a couple torrential downpours, and yes sleet and snow by the end of the week. In one week!

So, what does this time of the year mean when it comes to Storm Water Pollution Prevention. Below you can read what steps you can take when it comes to your lawn and garden care in our City. This is just a couple ways you can help reduce the pollution that reaches our storm water infrastructure like the ditches, swales, pipeline, ponds and ultimately Cedar Creek. Every quarter our department distributes an article on ways we all can reduce storm water pollution.

Lawn care:

- Apply fertilizers only when necessary and at the recommended amount.
- Don't apply fertilizer before windy or when expecting heavy rain.
- Apply fertilizer as close as possible to the period of maximum uptake and growth for grass and other plants, which is usually spring and fall in cool climate, and early and late summer in warm climates.
- Avoid applying fertilizer close to waterways.
- Do not overwater lawns and garden; use a soaker hose, a porous hose that releases water directly to the ground, which can reduce overwatering that carries away fertilizers that would otherwise enrich lawns and gardens.
- Fill fertilizer spreaders on a hard surface so that any spills can be easily cleaned up.
- Properly store unused fertilizers and properly dispose of empty containers.

Garden care:

- Plant a rain garden of native plants, shrubs and trees that reduce the amount of fertilizer needed and provide a way for water to soak into the ground.
- Install a rain barrel to collect rainwater; the rainwater can later be used to water your landscape and gardens
- Adopt techniques that utilize natural processes to manage stormwater runoff and reduce the impact of impervious surfaces on water quality.
- Use pervious pavers for walkways and low traffic areas to allow water to soak into the ground.
- Install a green roof on your home or business.
- Incorporate best management practices, such as grassed swales, filter strips, or buffer strips on your property to control and temporarily store stormwater runoff.
- Use yard waste, which includes grass clippings and leaves, in mulch or compost for your garden. If this is not an option, prepare all clippings and leaves for community composting. Auburn has an excellent area to drop off leaves, grass, brush, and general yard waste at the Northeast Solid waste management districts compost lot on County Road 36, just northwest of town.



Information contained in this educational article was obtained from the USEPA storm water web site www.epa.gov/npdes/stormwater. For additional information regarding your local storm water issues, please contact Drew Wallace, Program Coordinator at the City of Auburn Water Pollution Control, 2010 South Wayne St. Auburn IN 46706. (260-925-1714)