



Loudoun County lies within the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. Land use, agricultural activities, and stormwater pollution in Loudoun County affect the health of the Bay.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES, VISIT:

Virginia Co-Operative Extension
Loudoun County Master Gardeners
www.loudouncountymastergardeners.org

Chesapeake Bay Foundation
www.cbf.org/landscaping



Loudoun County appreciates your help in protecting our valuable water resources.

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801 Sycolin Road, Suite 300
Leesburg, VA 20175



Help Protect Loudoun County's
Streams and Lakes

A Resident's Guide to Lawn Care for a Cleaner Environment



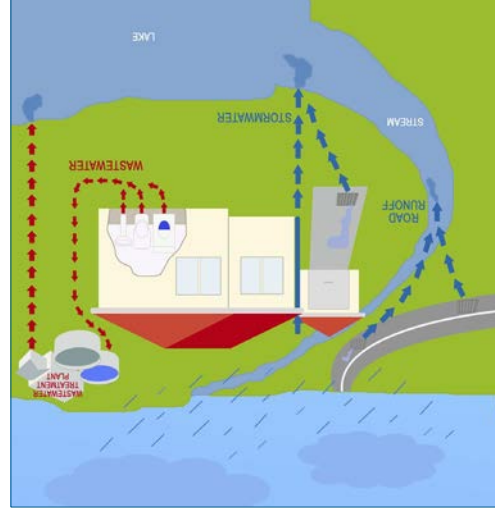
Be the Solution to Stormwater Pollution



the problem

Incorrect gardening practices such as overuse of fertilizer/pesticides, overwatering of lawns, and improper disposal of yard waste (e.g., grass clippings, fallen leaves, and yard trimmings) are major contributors to stormwater pollution. Although nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus are vital for plant growth, when in excess, these pollutants can contaminate our drinking water and harm fish and aquatic life.

When it rains, the water flows over the lawn, down the driveway—picking up debris, yard waste, and excess fertilizers/pesticides—and goes into the storm drain. The untreated water eventually discharges into a natural body of water.



Improper lawn care practices can hurt our waterways in the following ways:

- Nutrients including nitrogen and phosphorus from fertilizers can cause large amounts of algae to grow, which depletes the oxygen level in the water, blocks out sunlight, and can kill fish.
- Pesticides and herbicides contain toxic chemicals that are harmful to humans, animals, and plants and contaminate drinking water sources.

the facts

The Chesapeake Bay watershed contains 3 million acres of turf. Half of those lawns are fertilized, mostly with synthetic chemical fertilizers, and half of those lawns are overfertilized. (Source: *Center for Watershed Protection Survey*)



Leaving grass clippings on your lawn can generate up to 25% of the lawn's yearly fertilizer needs and reduce the amount of time and money you spend fertilizing and bagging.

Nutrient pollution has turned the Chesapeake Bay into one of the largest dead zones (low oxygen/plant life) in the nation, occupying about 40 percent of its area and 5 percent of its volume.

Benefits of keeping a well-maintained lawn:

- Filters contaminants from rainwater and the atmosphere
- Reduces runoff from impervious areas such as streets, roofs, driveways, and parking lots
- Absorbs nutrients and prevents losses to the groundwater
- Reduces the risk of contaminating drinking water and helps prevent pollution of water bodies
- Decreases soil erosion
- Reduces run-off from storms
- Improves aesthetics and increases the value of your property

the solution

Yard Waste

- Compost grass clippings, fallen leaves, and yard trimmings, or leave grass clippings on the lawn because they serve as a natural, nontoxic fertilizer.
- Keep leaves and grass out of streets, drainage ditches, and storm drains.

Below are some tips:

Good lawn care contributes to healthier, cleaner streams and water supplies.

Fertilizers & Pesticides

- Fertilize in the fall, if at all.
- Use fertilizers sparingly and test your soil for nutrient levels before applying fertilizer.
- Consider organic fertilizers because they release nutrients slowly.
- Do not fertilize before it rains.
- Do not pour leftover pesticides down the sink, toilet, or storm drain.
- Apply pesticides in accordance with the label instructions.
- Try nontoxic or less toxic alternatives to chemicals, such as traps, horticultural oils, insecticide soap.

Lawn Specific Tips

- Make your lawn easier and cheaper to maintain by mowing high – 3 inches is the rule.
- Avoid over-watering your lawn – it needs about 1 inch of rain per week.