

Protecting the Huron River

Summer

it begins in your yard...



Whenever it rains, water flows over your yard, carrying untreated pollutants like fertilizer and pesticides into our rivers and lakes directly or through the stormdrains.

Here are some steps you can take to keep lawn care pollutants out of the river:

- Wait until the ground is fully thawed to apply fertilizer.
- Use a broom to sweep fertilizer spills on sidewalks back onto your lawn.
- Go phosphorus-free when choosing lawn fertilizer. Most area lawns already have enough and several watershed communities restrict its use.
- Don't guess, soil test. Find the fertilizer best suited for the condition of your soil.
- Consider applying lawn fertilizer only once this year, in the fall.
- Reduce your need for lawn fertilizer altogether by keeping the grass blade 3 inches tall after cutting to promote healthy root growth.
- Leave a "no fertilizer" zone of at least 25 feet from waterways.
- Reduce the size of your lawn by planting deep-rooted native grasses and plants.

Scoop the poop...

There's an important reason to pick up after your pet: water. When pet waste is left behind, it washes into storm drains and ditches. From there, it heads straight to your local river. No filters, no cleansing. Swimming, anyone?

Help protect water quality. Stoop, scoop, and drop those little baggies in the trash. Then give yourself a nice pat. . . . You deserve it.

Save water, save energy...

Reducing your "water footprint" can go a long way toward conserving energy. At a minimum, the United States uses the equivalent of 520 billion kilowatt hours per year--equivalent to 13% of the nation's total electricity use--to pump, heat and treat water. This is double what is generated by all of the nation's hydroelectric dams in an average year and equal to the output of over 150 typical coal-fired power plants!

For the average person, there's the water we use directly -- in our kitchens and bathrooms, to wash our clothes and keep our yards and gardens growing and our cars clean. And indirectly -- water that helps make the things we use and the food we eat. One way we can make a difference is by choosing "low-flow" fixtures and water efficient appliances for our homes. Take a look at the EPA's Water Sense site, www.epa.gov/WaterSense. Its chock full of tips, resources and even rebates for making your home more water efficient.

Wash your car on the lawn...

Washing the car can be lots of fun. Did you know it can benefit your lawn, too? It's true! Just pull your car onto the grass and wash it there. Your lawn will gladly soak up the water. Plus the grass will break down the soap and absorb any phosphates for use as fertilizer.



There's another bonus to getting clean on the green. Keeping soapy water out of storm drains and ditches protects water quality. That's because anything that enters storm drains or ditches is headed straight for your local lake or river. No filters, no treatment.

If you can't wash your car on the lawn, use a commercial car wash. Regulations require commercial car washes to collect and treat the wash water.

Brought to you in part by the
Huron River Watershed Council.
For additional information and
resources go to www.hrwc.org

