

The Importance of Clean Water

Pollution from sources like industrial factory wastes have been greatly reduced -- that's great! Today, the largest source of water pollution (over 50%) comes from these everyday things:

- Motor vehicle fluids
- Pet wastes
- Soaps from residential car and power washing
- Failing septic systems
- Leaves and grass clippings
- Fertilizers from farms, lawns, and gardens
- Household hazardous wastes

All these small sources add up to a big pollution problem, but each of us can do simple things to help keep our waters clean. Having a clean environment is of primary importance for our health and economy. Clean waterways provide recreation, commercial opportunities, habitat for aquatic animals, and natural beauty.



Do Your Part



Use pesticides and fertilizers sparingly and keep yard waste away from storm drains.



For more information or to learn more about protecting our water, visit the link below or contact the Tri-County Regional Planning Commission.



mywatersheds.org
mywatersheds@mitcrpc.org



TRI-COUNTY
regional planning commission



POLLUTION ISN'T PRETTY.



GREATER LANSING
REGIONAL COMMITTEE
FOR STORMWATER MANAGEMENT

Lawn & Garden Care



mywatersheds.org

What's the Problem with Fertilizer?

Fertilizer isn't a problem when used carefully, but if you use too much or apply it at the wrong time, it can easily wash off your lawn or garden and into storm drains. From there, it flows into our rivers, streams, wetlands, and lakes without undergoing treatment.

Fertilizers make aquatic plants grow, yet while fertilizer may help our lawns and gardens, excess phosphorus and nitrogen in waterways causes algae to grow faster than aquatic ecosystems can handle. Large algal blooms reduce oxygen levels, increase toxicity, and spur bacterial growth, making the water unsafe for human recreation and aquatic life. By properly applying and limiting lawn fertilizer usage, you can help protect our surface water resources from nutrient pollution.

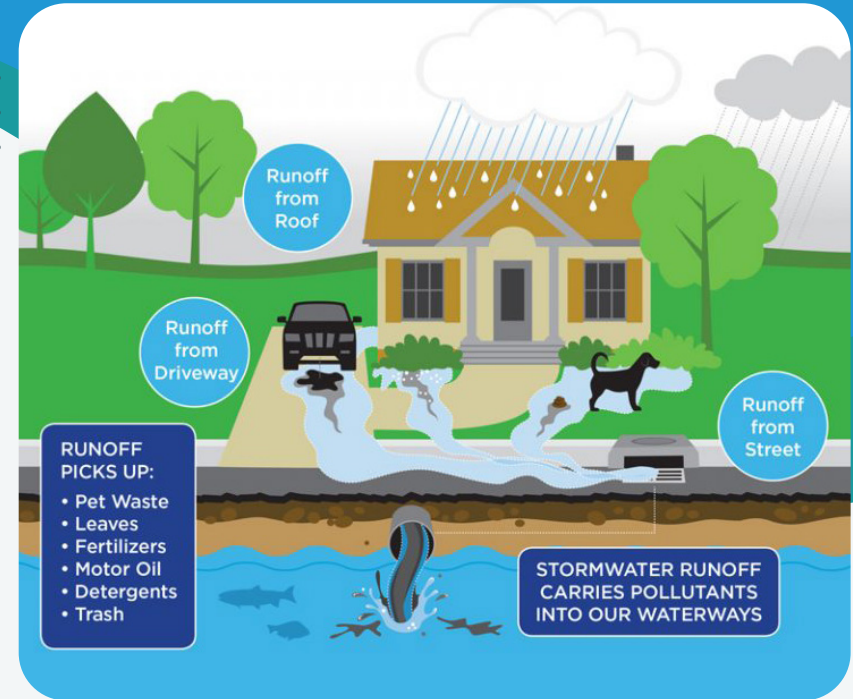


Where Do All Those Storm Drains Lead?

Did you know that most storm drains are NOT connected to treatment plants? The purpose of storm drains is to carry rain runoff and snowmelt away from developed areas to prevent flooding. The untreated stormwater and the pollutants it carries flow directly into our creeks, rivers, and eventually the Great Lakes. Keeping pollutants off the ground helps keep them out of our waterways.

Help Keep Our Water Clean

- Use fertilizers and pesticides sparingly. Test the soil to determine if fertilizers are necessary, and if so, use the minimum amount needed.
- Leave grass clippings on the lawn to decompose and recycle nutrients back into the soil.
- Consider using organic fertilizers and pest control methods whenever possible.
- Use compost – your plants will need less chemical fertilizer, and it puts waste to good use.
- Don't overwater your lawn and garden.
- Consider using a drip system or soaker hose instead of a sprinkler.
- Don't fertilize before a rainstorm.
- Sweep up grass clippings and fertilizer from paved surfaces and properly dispose of them.



- Mulch mow, compost, or bag leaves. Keep them away from storm drains, as they can block water from flowing and increase nutrient levels in waterways when decaying.
- Install green infrastructure like rain barrels and rain gardens. Native plants do not need as much water or fertilizer.