

# YARD MAINTENANCE/GARDENING

## WHAT CAN YOU DO?

### CLEAN WATER BEGINS AT HOME

This section deals with the normal yard maintenance activities we perform at home. Overwatering, over fertilizing, improper pesticide or herbicide application, and improper disposal of trimmings and clippings can all contribute to water pollution problems.

The suggestions below will help reduce or prevent pollutant runoff.

- Practice organic gardening to eliminate the need to use pesticides and fertilizers. Contact Clark County WSU Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Program at 254-8436 for information on earth-friendly gardening.
- Save water and prevent pollution problems by not over-watering. Lawns and gardens typically need the equivalent of 1" of rainfall per week. You can check the amount of water by putting empty tuna or cat food cans out where you're sprinkling to measure the water depth. Over watering can wash nutrients into the nearest water body.
- Follow the manufacturer's directions precisely for mixing and applying herbicides, fungicides, and insecticides. Use them sparingly. Never apply when it's windy or rain is expected. Never apply over water, within 100 feet of a well or adjacent to streams or other waterways. Triple-rinse empty containers and use the rinse water to complete the application or save it for your next spray. Double-bag empty containers and put in the garbage.



- Follow manufacturer's directions when applying fertilizers and avoid leaving fertilizer on driveways and sidewalks where it can wash off. Never apply fertilizers over water or adjacent to ditches, streams, or other water bodies. Remember, organic fertilizers have a slow release of nitrogen and, thus, less potential to pollute than synthetic fertilizers. There are also slow release fertilizers that tend to add more nitrogen when the grass needs it.
- When buying fertilizers, pesticides, or other chemicals, buy only the amount you need for your project. Share the leftovers with friends or neighbors. Safely dispose of any leftovers at the two household hazardous waste disposal stations in Clark County. Disposal is free.
- Never dispose of grass clippings or other vegetation in or near storm drains, streams, lakes or wetlands.
- Consider planting a vegetated buffer zone adjacent to streams or other water bodies on your property. Call the Clark County Conservation District at 696-7631 for advice and assistance in developing a planting plan.
- Store all fertilizers and pesticides in a covered location. Rain can wash the labels off bottles and turn a bag of fertilizer into a solid lump, or it can disintegrate and wash into storm drains and water bodies.
- Compost all yard clippings, use a mulching lawn mower, use clippings as mulch to save water and keep down weeds in your garden, or leave clippings on the lawn. See "Composting Section" in this manual for additional info.
- Practice organic gardening to eliminate the need to use pesticides and fertilizers. Contact Clark County WSU Cooperative Extension Master Gardener Program at 254-8436 for additional information on earth-friendly gardening.
- Pull weeds instead of spraying; it's healthy exercise too. If you must spray, use the least toxic formulations that will get the job done. The folks in the Master Gardener Program listed on above can help advise you on which spray to use.
- Work fertilizers into the soil instead of letting them lie on the ground surface exposed to the next rain storm.

For curbside recycling of hard waste in Vancouver, Battle Ground, and urban Clark County, call Waste Management at 737-2425. For the Camas/Washougal area, call Waste Connections at 892-5370.