

## LAWNCARE AND GARDENING

When keeping your lawn and garden looking nice it is easy to accidentally harm our environment. Sprinkler runoff carries pesticides and fertilizers into the storm drain system. Leaves, grass clippings and yard waste get swept or blown into the street, clogging catch basins and polluting waterways. Fertilizer runoff can cause algae overgrowth in our channels and beaches. Following a few green tips is all it takes to prevent pollution.

### Pesticides and fertilizers:

- Pull weeds by hand or use non-toxic alternatives to traditional pesticides and fertilizers.
- Never apply pesticides or fertilizers before rain or near storm drains, channels, creeks or other water bodies.
- Store pesticides and fertilizers in a closed area. Take unwanted pesticides and fertilizers to a household hazardous waste collection site to be recycled.

### Wise water use:

- Control the amount of water and direction of sprinklers, to avoid waste and runoff.
- Use drip irrigation, soaker hoses and micro spray systems, to better control the amount of water you use.
- Periodically inspect and fix leaks and misdirected sprinklers.



### Yard waste:

- Recycle leaves, grass clippings and other yard waste. It is important that they do not go into the storm drains.
- Try grasscycling, letting grass clippings drop on your lawn, instead of using a grass catcher. The clippings act as a natural fertilizer, returning nutrients and organic matter back to the soil, and because grass is mostly water, it also irrigates your lawn, conserving water. Reducing the need to water as often or use toxic fertilizers means less contaminated runoff from your lawn.

## FERTILIZER USE

Fertilizer provides vital nutrients to your garden, but when excessive nutrients end up in our channels and oceans they fuel algal blooms. These massive algal blooms use up all the oxygen in the water, creating a dead zone. Even lawn clippings in the storm water can lead to algal blooms and dead zones because they provide an easily accessible form of organic nutrients. Don't let them get washed down the gutter into the storm drain.

### Tips to reduce fertilizer runoff:

- Don't apply fertilizer before rain.
- Follow the directions on the bag of fertilizer.

- Use a slow-releasing fertilizer. This will prevent runoff and prolong the benefit your plants receive.
- Sweep up all lawn clippings and either compost them to use as mulch (which will save you money and keep your soil moist) or dispose of them through community services.

Not sure how much fertilizer to use? Use Perdue's Turf Fertilizer Calculator!

<https://turf.purdue.edu/fertilizerCalculator/index.html>

### Lawn care educational materials

- *Episode 2: Lawn Removal – Lawn Be Gone*
  - <https://youtu.be/C8iBX5fz3R0>
  - There are many benefits to swapping your grass out for drought-tolerant plants!
  - Learn the strategy behind rain water capture and use!
- *Episode 4: Lawn Practices – Grass Can Always Be Greener*
  - <https://youtu.be/SJYubS0LQdw>
  - Is your lawn looking unhealthy? You may have been overwatering or overfertilizing! Learn how to take better care of your lawn.
- *Episode 7: Swales Are Swell And So Are Rain Gardens*
  - <https://youtu.be/iAY5jixv0Gc>
  - Increase infiltration in your yard! Keep water from pooling around your house with simple adjustments to your lawn.
  - Find out while swales are so popular!

## PESTICIDE MANAGEMENT

### OVERKILL: Manage Pests and Protect Water Quality

Pesticides are one of the most dangerous pollutants found in our creeks, rivers, bays and ocean. When pesticides are sprayed on the sidewalks or in gardens, water from rain, hoses or sprinklers can carry these poisons to the storm drain where they flow, untreated, to our waterways. This can contaminate the water and threaten wildlife and marine life.



[Responsible Pest Control](#) (brochure)

### Choose the least toxic method of treatment

Pesticides should only be used when other less-toxic methods have failed. Also, use the smallest amount of pesticide needed for the job. For a list of pests and nonpesticide alternatives visit the University of California Statewide Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Program at [www.ipm.ucdavis.edu](http://www.ipm.ucdavis.edu).

### For fewer pests in your garden consider:

- Draining buckets or other items that hold standing water.
- Using mulch in flower beds to prevent weeds.

- Planting trees, shrubs and grass well-suited for the climate.
- Cutting tall weeds, brush or grass.
- Cleaning out gutters often and making sure that water drains away from the house.

For agriculture chemicals, pesticides and possible alternatives: O.C. Agriculture Commissioner, (714) 447-7100.