

Yard Waste and Stormwater Pollution

When it rains, whatever doesn't soak into the ground runs off roofs and yards, down streets and ditches, into storm drains and then directly into rivers, lakes, creeks, and other local water bodies. If that runoff is polluted, it is most likely due to our own actions.

Yard waste includes grass clippings, leaves, tree and shrub trimmings, and plant materials from vegetable and flower gardens. As vegetation decays in water, it contaminates the surface waters and the excess water gets carried to Lake Erie.

Too much fertilizer in lawns and gardens, pet waste, littering, improper disposal of household waste and chemicals are sources of pollution. Poorly maintained or leaking septic systems are also stormwater pollutants.



*Polluted stormwater closes beaches, kills wildlife, poisons drinking water resources, and destroys fish and shellfish habitat.

You Can Make a Difference!



- ⇒ Clean up after your pets. Pet waste contains nutrients and pathogens that can contaminate surface water.
- ⇒ **DO NOT** dump yard or pet waste onto the banks of or into any creek, ditch, street, or storm drain. Waterways need to stay free of waste in order to prevent polluting our surface waters. Excess waste also blocks waterways causing flooding.
- ⇒ Identify storm drains and ditches near you and remove any potential blockages and pollutants.
- ⇒ Leave mulched lawn clippings on your lawn so that nutrients in the clippings are recycled and less yard waste goes to landfills. If composting at home, locate the compost pile away from waterways.

*For information on the disposal of hazardous waste items contact the Lorain County Solid Waste Management District at 440-329-5440.

Or visit the Solid Waste Management website:

www.loraincounty.us/solidwaste

Healthy Lawn Tips

- Test your soil before applying fertilizers. Over-fertilization is a common problem. The excessive chemicals can leach into ground water or contaminate rivers or lakes. **Do not apply** pesticides or fertilizers before or during rain because of the strong likelihood of runoff.



- Calibrate your applicator before applying pesticides or fertilizers. As equipment ages, annual adjustments might be needed.
- When your lawn or garden needs watering, use slow-watering techniques such as trickle irrigation or soaker hoses. Don't over water; over-watering your lawn or garden can increase leaching of fertilizers to ground water.
- If you elect to use a professional lawn care service, select a company that employs trained technicians and follows practices designed to minimize the use of fertilizers and pesticides.

Natural Weed Killer

When landscaping your yard, select plants that have low requirements for water, fertilizers and pesticides. Pull weeds by hand when possible.

Try this recipe below to help with weeds:

Organic Weed Killer Recipe

Need:

- 1 gallon white vinegar
- 2 cups Epsom salt or table salt
- 1/4 cup Dawn dishwashing soap

Directions:

Pour the vinegar, dish soap, and Epsom salt into a spray bottle.

Let settle for 2 minutes then spray the weeds! Make sure you soak the entire weed with the formula.

Let sit for a day. Weeds should be dead within 24 hours.



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Public Involvement Public Education

Educating the public on our impact on Lake Erie