

## Clean Water Begins in Your Own Back Yard

What we do in our yard affects our local waterways. The good news is that we can care for our yard in a way that prevents pollutants from going into local streams and rivers. Clean water not only looks good, it's vital to life. Below are some ideas for your home turf.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Sediment, or eroded soil, is the top polluter of central Ohio's streams and rivers. Healthy grass provides environmental services that include slowing or filtering rainwater and preventing soil erosion.

### COMMIT TO CLEAN WATER

The City of Columbus, Franklin Soil and Water, and local lawn care companies have partnered to encourage our residents to do their part for water quality by caring for their lawn properly. Visit [getgrassy.org](http://getgrassy.org) to learn more, and take our pledge to receive a free gift.



### LAWN CARE TIPS

- The research is in - and it shows that fertilizing before May can stunt your lawn's root growth. Waiting to fertilize helps your lawn develop stronger roots that are better for filtering water and keeping grass green in hot summer months.
- When using fertilizer or weed and pest control products, pay close attention to instructions found on the label.
- Make sure the liquids and granules fall on your lawn where they can do their job. Sweep up whatever falls onto the sidewalk or street.
- Mulched lawn clippings are a natural fertilizer. Let them go to work on your yard so you don't have to.
- Mow to grow by sharpening mower blades and set to the highest setting (3 to 4"). Tall grass equals deep roots and fewer weeds.
- Spring grass grows fast. Mow more than once a week to avoid removing too much at one time.

### DISPOSE OF YARD WASTE PROPERLY

Dumping yard waste into storm drains or waterways adds excess nutrients to the water, can clog the drains and contribute to roadway flooding; and it is illegal.

The City of Columbus Com-Til Compost Facility accepts yard waste free of charge, year round. Visit [com-til.org](http://com-til.org) for additional details and disposal options. Better yet, compost and mulch your yard waste!



Additionally...

- Sweep outdoor surfaces with a broom rather than hosing them down. When using the hose, let your grass absorb the waste water instead of sending it to street.
- Save yourself some cleanup by preventing leaks and spills from reaching the surface. Simply place drip pans or plastic sheeting under your work area.
- If a spill does occur, use an absorbent material such as cat litter, sweep it up and discard it in the trash.
- When cleaning items such as lawn furniture, use a bucket and sponge instead of a hose.

### BAG THE WASTE

There are about 277,000 dogs in Franklin County and, on average, each one creates 0.75 pounds of waste per day. That's nearly 104 tons of dog waste every day! Dog waste contains some nasty bacteria and when left on the ground it washes into storm drains that lead directly to our streams and rivers.

So if you are a dog owner, "doo" the right thing and take the pledge to PUP (Pick Up Poop) at [columbus.gov/pup](http://columbus.gov/pup) and receive a PUP prize of biodegradable bags.

Also look for pet waste stations in Columbus parks.





## LET US KNOW

It takes a community to keep our streams and rivers clean. Please let us know if you see anything other than rain water entering a storm drain on your street by calling 614-645-STREAM (7873) in Columbus, or call the Ohio EPA at 1-800-282-9378.

Small actions like picking up trash and debris before it washes into a storm drain help keep our water clean.



## LET OTHERS KNOW

Storm sewer? Sanitary sewer? It's hard to keep track of all those pipes running underground and out of sight. Take part in Columbus' storm drain marking program and you can help remind people that the storm drains on your street empty directly into our rivers.

Visit [columbus.gov/stormdrainmarker](http://columbus.gov/stormdrainmarker) or call 614-645-2926.

## WANT TO DO MORE?

Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District, in partnership with the City of Columbus, offers workshops where you can meet watershed coordinators and conservation staff, ask questions and get more information about backyard conservation topics that interest you. Each workshop is 90 minutes and explains different actions you can take to prevent water pollution. At the end of the workshop you'll receive a voucher for a \$50 rebate on qualifying native plants, trees, compost bins, or rain barrels.

**COMMUNITY  
BACKYARDS  
GET \$50 FOR YOUR YARD!**

Visit [www.communitybackyards.eventbrite.com](http://www.communitybackyards.eventbrite.com) to find a workshop near you.

## VOLUNTEER FOR CLEAN WATER

If you are interested in protecting our natural resources, get involved in our public education programs. You, your community, or school group can participate in stream-bank litter cleanups, invasive plant removal and many other activities that promote awareness & appreciation of our natural waterways.

To learn more, visit us at:  
[www.columbus.gov/utilities/customers/Volunteer-Opportunities/](http://www.columbus.gov/utilities/customers/Volunteer-Opportunities/).



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