

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 to learn more, and take our pledge to receive a free gift.



LAWN CARE TIPS - MOW to GROW

- Most lawns need to be cut every four to five days, not every seven to ten days, like most of us tend towards!
- Follow the One-Third Rule: Never remove more than a third of the grass blade.
- Don't scalp your lawn if spring rain or vacation leaves you with really tall grass. Instead, gradually reduce cutting height to keep a healthy balance between root and blade growth. If you keep scalping your lawn, you won't have to mow as often because your grass will die!
- Keep your grass tall at 2½" to 3½" to preserve moisture and out-compete weeds.
- Sharpen those mower blades. Dull blades chew, tear, and rip grass, which stresses the plant. Torn grass blades die back and are more likely to succumb to disease and pests. And you can save on fuel costs by using efficient, sharp mower blades. Sharpen at least once a year, and check out reel mowers if you've got a small yard.

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 Columbus Com-Til Compost Facility accepts yard waste free of charge, year round. Visit 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 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 or call 614-645-2926.

WANT to DO MORE?

Franklin Soil and Water, 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. There is also an informative online course and quiz if you cannot attend a workshop, but still become eligible for a rebate.

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

Visit www.communitybackyards.org/participate for more information!

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.

Learn more at:
www.columbus.gov/utilities/customers/Volunteer-Opportunities/.



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