

# Protecting a Vital Resource



## GET INVOLVED

### WANT TO VOLUNTEER?

Volunteer to clean up along waterways. Find a list of options at [publicutilities.columbus.gov/volunteer.aspx](http://publicutilities.columbus.gov/volunteer.aspx)

### LOOKING FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE HOURS?

Adhere *No Dumping, Drains to River* markers at stormwater inlets. [www.utilities.columbus.gov](http://www.utilities.columbus.gov) has the information you will need.

### SPOT A PROBLEM?

Report any questionable substance flowing into a storm drain, ditch or waterway at 645-7102.

## HELP PROTECT THE QUALITY OF OUR WATER

Did you know that you have a role in protecting the quality of our water? As rain flows over yards, sidewalks, driveways, rooftops and roadways it can wash any trash, dirt, oil, excess fertilizer or other pollutant in its path into a stormwater inlet. The inlet connects to a series of underground pipes emptying into a nearby stream or river. What's on the ground matters. This type of pollution is the greatest threat to clean water.



## SIMPLE GARDENING TIPS THAT MATTER

### GO NATIVE

One easy way to protect water quality is by putting nature to use. Once established, native plants can typically thrive on rain alone. That's right - no watering, no fertilizer required. That's gardening made easy. Easy on your wallet and easy on our waterways.



### PUT RAIN WATER TO USE

Rain barrels capture rain water for later



use in your garden or planters. Next time you fill a water can, why not save money and fill it

with free water captured in a rain barrel? [www.GreenSpotRainBarrels.org](http://www.GreenSpotRainBarrels.org) will tell you how you can buy a rain barrel at a reduced price.

### GARDEN WITH A PURPOSE

A current gardening trend is to turn a hobby into a purpose, and that purpose is clean water. Want to go with the trend? Here's an idea: plant a rain garden to capture rain water runoff from hard surfaces, filter pollutants and slow down its release into our waterways. More information is at [www.CentralOhioRainGardens.org](http://www.CentralOhioRainGardens.org).

## THE TOP THREE THREATS TO OUR WATERWAYS AND WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

### LAWN CARE

A few easy lawn care practices can make a big difference in the quality of our water:



- Runoff from fertilizer and pesticides are a major source of water pollution. Franklin Soil and Water lists service providers that test your soil to see if fertilizer is required. Look under their Backyard Conservation program at [www.franklinswcd.org](http://www.franklinswcd.org). Spot treat your yard only when necessary. Check for rain in the forecast to avoid having to reapply.
- Dispose of yard waste properly. Dumping into storm drains or waterways is prohibited by law.
- Sweep pavement instead of hosing debris into storm drains.

### VEHICLE MAINTENANCE AND WASHING

Keep grit, oil and other fluids out of storm drains:

- Use a commercial car wash (they drain into the sanitary sewer) or wash your car on an unpaved surface that will soak in dirty, soapy water.
- Regularly check for leaks to keep fluids in your vehicle and out of storm drains. If leaks occur, clean them up with an absorbent material like kitty litter or sand and place it in the trash.
- Take used oil and other fluids to a household hazardous waste drop-off location. [www.swaco.org](http://www.swaco.org) has a schedule.



### PET WASTE

There are many good reasons to pick up your pet's waste. Did you know that you are protecting water quality every time you scoop it up? When left on the ground, rain washes bacteria and excess nutrients from pet waste into storm drains and directly into our waterways. Pick up all pet waste. Flush it in the toilet to send it through the sanitary sewer where the waste will be treated, or bag it and place it in the trash.