

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?

Native plants require up to 50% less water than traditional turfgrass and provide essential habitat for pollinators. Less watering means less runoff and healthier streams!

COMMIT to CLEAN WATER

The City of Columbus, Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District, and local lawn care companies have partnered to encourage residents to protect water quality with low maintenance lawn care. To learn how, visit communitybackyards.org/ and explore rain barrels, rain gardens, native plants, compost bins, and rebates.



TRADE in and GREEN UP

Every spring, GreenSpot members have the opportunity to swap out their old gas-powered mower for a cleaner, battery-powered option. Gas mowers don't just pollute the air - they can also threaten our water. Spilled fuel, leaking oil, and lawn chemicals washed away by rain can seep into local streams and rivers, harming wildlife and drinking supplies. Switching to an electric mower helps protect air quality, waterways, and the climate.

Visit columbus.gov/GreenSpot to become a GreenSpot member today. Make sure you subscribe to the newsletters to learn when the next exchange is happening.



DISPOSE of YARD WASTE PROPERLY

Dumping yard waste into storm drains or waterways is not only illegal, it harms water quality, clogs drains, and contributes to roadway flooding.

The Com-Til Compost Facility accepts yard waste free of charge, year round. Visit columbus.gov/com-til for additional details and disposal options. Better yet, compost and mulch your yard waste (see below).



Other tips include:

- Start your own backyard compost pile. Green leaves and grass clippings are rich in nitrogen, while dry leaves provide valuable carbon. Both are vital to break these materials down, turning them into rich compost.
- Place yard waste in paper bags on your curb for collection in Columbus. Visit columbus.gov/Residents/Trash-Recycling-Bulk-Collection/Yard-Waste-Collection to find your collection day or to learn more about: yard waste facts, preparation, other drop off locations, and more.
- Use one of Columbus' Waste and Reuse Convenience Centers, located on Alum Creek Drive and on Georgesville Road. Visit columbus.gov/KeepColumbusBeautiful.org for accepted items and details.

WATER WISELY

Water your lawn wisely to conserve water and prevent pollution. Water early in the morning or late in the evening to reduce evaporation, and aim for about one inch per week, including rainfall. Deep, infrequent watering encourages strong roots that absorb stormwater and reduce runoff. Use a rain gauge to track water use and avoid watering before or after rain. Position sprinklers to water grass, not pavement, and fix leaks to prevent waste. Consider drip irrigation for gardens to target roots directly. Smart watering keeps your lawn healthy while protecting our waterways from excess runoff and pollution.

Learn more simple things you can do at home to protect our water at columbus.gov/KeepItClean.



REPORT DRAIN POLLUTION

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.

STORM DRAIN MARKERS

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. Program limited to City of Columbus storm drains only.

Visit columbus.gov/stormdrainmarker or call 614-645-2926.



DO YOUR "DOOTY"

Did you know your pet can impact water quality? Dog waste is a major contributor to water "poo-llution". Dog waste has bacteria that is not healthy for the people, fish and wildlife that live and play in our waterways. One gram of dog waste has 23 million bacteria. When it rains, bacteria from pet waste is carried into streams and rivers, contaminating our

sources of drinking water. To prevent health issues for humans and wildlife, pet owners should pick up and dispose of pet waste responsibly. Check out this video to learn more: <https://tinyurl.com/PUP-MOV>.

So if you are a dog owner, "doo" the right thing and PUP (Pick Up Poop). Visit us and the PUP Wagon at events this spring and summer to take the Pup Pledge; or visit columbus.gov/PUP. You will receive a PUP prize for your commitment to making a cleaner Columbus. Also look for pet waste stations in Columbus parks.

WANT to DO MORE?

Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District (FSWCD) holds a Master Rain Gardener program every year. The program is a certification course and trains residents to build their own rain garden throughout a series of classes, field trips, and design feedback.

To become a Master Rain Gardener, participants must complete a five-week course and either install their own rain garden or adopt a public rain garden. Visit franklinswcd.org/master-rain-gardener for more information.

MASTER
RAIN
GARDENER



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 and appreciation of our natural waterways.

Learn more at columbus.gov/Volunteer or connect on social media by following: Columbus GreenSpot (@columbusgreenspot), Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District (@franklinsoilandwater), Green Columbus (@green_columbus), and local watershed organizations to learn about upcoming events. Get involved and help keep our natural resources clean!



Please join us on Facebook (Columbus Public Utilities), X (@cdpu), and Instagram (columbuspublicutilities).