

## Landscaping & Maintenance

Landscaping and yard maintenance bring both aesthetic and economic value to properties and communities. Keeping your grass cut and trimming or pruning plants and trees also are important activities in complying with local zoning regulations.

## Yard Waste

Yard waste is a year round challenge: autumn leaves fall covering lawns, summer mowing creates grass clippings, spring gardens require weeding, and heavy rain storms cause tree limbs to fall. Cleaning up and removing yard waste is an ongoing task that can create other consequences if not properly handled.

Yard waste in the storm drain system causes many problems for our communities. Debris placed or washed into a storm drain can cause flooding; damage to the system if caught in culverts or pipes; and create algae blooms, fish kills and unpleasant odors as it decomposes in water.



*A compost bin is easy and inexpensive to build and will provide you free organic fertilizer!*

## Lawn and Garden Products

A green lawn and blooming garden make your home more beautiful and increase your property value. Using fertilizers, pesticides and weed killers are a great way to help you achieve this look, especially when you read and follow the package directions. However, using too much of a lawn and garden product or not correctly disposing of any excess can turn helpful products into harmful pollutants if they enter local waterways.



*You can grow a beautiful yard and garden and still do your part to protect water quality in waterways!*

Stormwater (rain water) can wash lawn products from your yard into nearby storm drains. The storm drain system is a network of inlets, gutters, ditches and pipes that carry untreated rain water directly into rivers, creeks, lakes and streams. These products do the same things in waterways that they do in your yard.

Fertilizers cause excessive algae blooms that reduce oxygen in the water and kill fish. Pesticides and herbicides kill insects and other aquatic life as well as plants that are necessary in the waterway food chain.

## Simple and Easy Practices

Landscaping and yard maintenance activities can be both responsible and rewarding. By using yard chemicals appropriately and properly managing yard waste, you can help protect water quality!

- Test your soil to determine the proper yard products and application rate for your lawn.
- Select low maintenance native plants to reduce water and chemical use.
- Choose the least toxic chemical products available and spot treat whenever possible.
- Apply products when no rain is in the forecast and avoid applying on windy days.
- Sweep up chemical products that fall on driveways, sidewalks and along roadways to prevent them from entering the storm drain system.
- Build a backyard compost pile to create free organic fertilizer.
- Allow nutrient rich grass clippings to remain on the lawn or compost with other yard waste.
- Avoid blowing or sweeping grass clippings or other yard debris into the street, storm drains, or ditches.
- Transport a properly secured load to a landfill for disposal.
- Rely on local resources such as garden shops, nurseries, and the Jefferson County Extension Office (879-6964) for your specific lawn and garden questions.

## How You Can Help

Pollution from stormwater runoff could be greatly reduced if each person living in our region would do just a few easy things to prevent its causes. Keeping vehicle fluids, yard debris, litter, and other materials out of the storm drain system is an important first step. Your part might seem small, but every little bit adds up to make a significant difference.

- Read and follow package label directions when using yard chemicals or household cleaners. Save money by only using the amount you really need.
- Fix or repair leaks on your vehicles and other equipment. Collect and recycle used oil.
- Properly dispose of or donate old paint.
- Pick up pet waste and discard in the trash.
- Capture rain water from your roof or downspouts for watering the lawn and inedible plants.
- Secure your loads when transporting items or materials before driving on roadways.
- Participate in Household Hazardous Waste Days to properly dispose of old cleaners, solvents, batteries, paint and other chemical waste.
- Schedule an educational program for your organization, event or neighborhood association. Call 325.8741.

If you see water pollution, unlawful dumping or an illicit connection to the storm drain system, call the **Complaint Hotline: 325.5792**

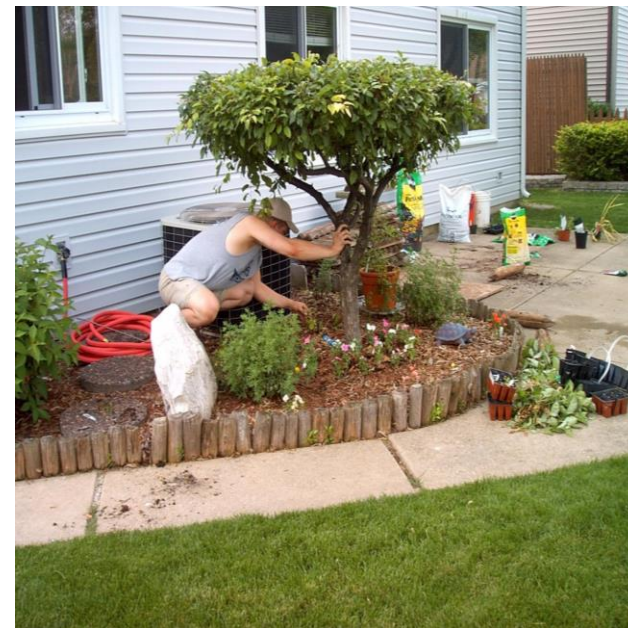
Learn more at:  
[www.jccal.org](http://www.jccal.org)

Report suspected water pollution.  
Call the Complaint Hotline:  
205.325.5792



Jefferson County Commission  
Department of Development Services  
Room B-200  
Jefferson County Courthouse  
716 Richard Arrington, Jr. Blvd. North  
Birmingham, AL 35203

## Lawn & Garden Products; Yard Waste



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Stormwater Program**

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