



# JEFFCO H<sub>2</sub>O NEWS

ISSUE 29 - FALL/WINTER 2019

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## Leave Them



Temperatures are a little cooler, the hours of daylight are a little shorter, and the holidays are just around the corner. It must be fall! One major chore this time of year is dealing with the many leaves falling into your yard. If you haven't tried mulching [leaves](#) into the lawn with a mower or using them as mulch on garden beds, this may be the year to try it. Not only will it save you time by not having to rake and bag, it also will help add nutrients to the soil, reduce spring weeds, and moderate soil temperatures. Speaking of leaves, fall also is a great time to start thinking about adding new trees, shrubs and other plants to your yard. Be sure to select healthy [stock](#) to maximize the new addition's chance of survival and protect your investment. And for those of you who are already thinking about what you will be planting in your home garden in the spring, it never hurts to do a little [refreshing](#) on what to plant when. If you have a gardening question that you would like some guidance on, call the free Master Gardener Helpline at 877-ALA-Grow (252-4769). Volunteers from

Master Gardener groups throughout Alabama work the phones to answer your questions and provide solutions to your gardening dilemmas!

## What's Happening

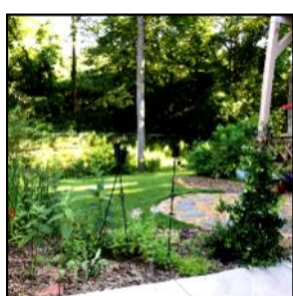
**National Prescription Drug Take Back Day - October 26** - Safely dispose of old or unwanted prescription drugs at the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office Center Point Substation (2651 Center Point Road 35215) or McCalla Substation (5725 Eastern Valley Road 35111) from 10am until 2pm. For more information, click [here](#).

**Moss Rock Festival - November 2, 3** - Explore nature, smart living, art and design at this eco-creative festival at The Preserve in Hoover. Click [HERE](#) to learn more.

**Stay Tuned!** - Jefferson County Commission, City of Birmingham, and Jefferson County Health Department will be hosting Household Hazardous Waste collection events on Saturday April 25 at three locations, and four Electronic Recycling collection events will be held on different Saturdays and locations in 2020. These events will be open to ALL residents of Jefferson County. Once these dates and locations are confirmed, details will be available in the next issue of this newsletter, at [www.jccal.org](http://www.jccal.org), or by calling 325-8741.

**New Publications** - They're here! Stop by Development Services in Room B-200 and pick up a 2020 Stormwater Calendar. Featured this time is the use of Green Infrastructure and Low Impact Development in Jefferson County to reduce polluted stormwater runoff. Find out how you can use these very same principals in your yard to beautify your landscape while improving water quality. Also new are the brochures [Illegal Dumping Affects YOU](#); [Jefferson County Volunteer Litter Cleanup Program](#); and [Stormwater Pond Maintenance](#). We can provide these and other helpful brochures to you free of charge to distribute in your community, business, or place of worship. Call 325-8741 for more information.

## The Intrepid Gardener



You may be an avid gardener, or you may hate to get your hands dirty. Either way, if you own a home, you are familiar with having to address issues that arise in order to maintain your property and keep your home in good repair. One common issue is rainwater and how it drains in your yard. Giving rainwater many opportunities to soak into the ground is one of the least expensive ways to improve drainage on your property. Creating a natural area filled with plants and trees, choosing walkways made of pavers or pebbles rather than concrete, or installing a rain garden filled with water loving plants will give your yard a jump start in reducing standing water and runoff. This past spring, Hana shared her strategies for improving the soil and drainage on her property by putting in place the foundational elements of a great landscape that includes native plants and water features. In this issue, we are going back to Hana's yard to see what else she has done to address drainage and add some more curb appeal. Don't miss her new [article](#), Do It Yourself

Solutions: Rainwater Drainage Issues in Your Landscape. It's filled with great ideas and practical solutions that you can use in your yard!

## Foggy, With A Chance of Clogs



One of the biggest challenges facing Jefferson County is FOG. Fat, oil, and grease rinsed or poured down thousands of drains wind up in our sewer lines. It's a big problem and it's not pretty. Jefferson County's Environmental Services Department provides sewer services to 145,000 residential, commercial, and industrial customers in 23 municipalities. There are ordinances in place which prevent restaurants and food processing facilities from dumping FOG into the sanitary sewer system. These businesses must use special procedures to properly dispose of FOG. But FOG from residential sources is another story. While there are no ordinances to prevent residential customers from rinsing or pouring FOG into the sink drain, the consequences are expensive and hazardous. Rinsing or pouring FOG into the sink drain results in a continuous build up that eventually blocks sewer pipes and causes sewage to back up into homes.

When many residents dispose of FOG this way, the main sewer lines outside clog, causing sewage overflows. You may or may not know that a main component of sewage is human waste. So when sewage backs up into your home or overflows from the sewer lines outside, it contaminates that area and any nearby creek or stream with large amounts of bacteria and other pathogens. This is a serious threat to water quality, public health, and property values. Plus it is just plain smelly and disgusting. If you've ever had to call a plumber to fix a sewage backup in your home, you also know it's not cheap. The cost to repair the outside sewer system lines is even greater. Keep costs down for everyone and properly dispose of FOG. FOG can be collected, cooled and disposed of in the household trash. But better yet, Environmental Services offers a residential FOG recycling program with conveniently located recycling centers to help you properly dispose of FOG. Just stop by a [center](#), grab a jug, fill with FOG, drop off the filled jug at a center, grab a clean jug, repeat. More locations coming soon!

## Check List



It seems that every season has its own check list, and fall is no exception! Clean up the garden and consider starting a [compost](#) pile in a corner of the yard with the collected plant debris. Having a ready supply of compost to add to your soil will provide many benefits for your landscape. If a [soil test](#) indicates that you need to apply fertilizer to your lawn or garden, make sure to buy the type of fertilizer that your soil actually needs, closely follow label instructions, and sweep up any fertilizer that falls on paved areas to prevent it from washing into storm drains. Over applying fertilizer will not help your landscape since plants can only uptake the nutrients they need, and any excess will just wash off during the next rain. If you are working on a landscaping project in your yard this season that involves disturbing the land, be sure to cover bare soil with a tarp or otherwise prevent it from washing away until you can replant and stabilize your project.

Bare soil washed by rain into streams causes sediment pollution. While you are going through your fall check list, be sure to take some time to enjoy all of the beautiful changes that this season is bringing to your landscape!