



Spring Weather Cleaning Tips

Spring weather can make a mess of your yard and our local waterways. Here are a few tips for getting your landscape back in shape and keeping local lakes, streams and rivers clean:

§ Avoid putting any permanent structures in flood prone areas of your yard and try to keep those areas clear during the spring. Spring storms can create standing water and voluntary streams that wash loose dirt and debris out of your yard and into creeks and roadside ditches where they are carried downstream to local waterways.

§ Keep grass clippings, leaves and debris out of local streams and wetlands. Compost your yard waste or dispose of it in your street-side pick-up. Yard waste that ends up in wetlands or streams contributes to algal growth in the summer, making the water green and smelly.

§ Stabilize your soil and increase infiltration by planting deep-rooted native plants or trees. The roots of turf grass extend only two to three inches into the soil, giving it little ability to hang on when the water flows. Native flowers and grasses, on the other hand, can have root systems four to twelve feet deep! These deep roots anchor the plants and keep soil from washing away. They also increase the amount of water the soil can absorb, meaning that more water sinks in to recharge groundwater aquifers and less ends up in the storm drain.

§ If you live along a stream or wetland, it is important to maintain a healthy un-mowed buffer along your shoreline. A shoreline or stream bank planted in trees and native plants will hold the soil steady when it rains. Buffers also catch and filter many of the pollutants found in stormwater runoff.