

Greenscape Challenge Toolkit



Take the Greenscape Challenge:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GreenscapeChallenge>



For more info:

www.frcog.org

www.greenfield-ma.gov



Yard maintenance and water quality FACT SHEET

What's the problem?

When it rains, fertilizers, pesticides and other chemicals can get washed from your yard and garden into storm drains, which flow into our rivers and streams. In addition to degrading water quality, pesticides can kill wildlife in rivers and streams, and fertilizers can cause algal blooms, which take oxygen out of our waterways - oxygen that fish need to survive. If you must use chemicals in your yard and garden, carefully read all labels and apply the products only as directed.

Organic lawn and garden care practices (no chemical pesticides or fertilizers) are a wise environmental choice and can save you money. Follow the below practices to reduce or eliminate chemical use.

Here's what you can do:

- Use fertilizers sparingly. Lawns and gardens likely need less fertilizer than you might think.
- Use organic fertilizers.
- Never fertilize before a rain storm (fertilizers can be washed into storm drains and water bodies.)
- Keep fertilizer off of paved surfaces. Sweep any fertilizer from paved surfaces onto the lawn.
- Use commercially available compost or make your own using garden waste.
- Don't bag grass clippings. Use a mulching lawn mower to regularly cut your grass - and naturally fertilize your lawn in the process!
- Maintain an unmowed buffer strip of native plants next to water bodies and paved surfaces to trap excess fertilizers.
- Grow an organic garden (no pesticides or fertilizers).

Here's the dirt on soil

Have your soil professionally tested. The basis of a low- or no-chemical lawn or garden is balanced soil that is nutrient-rich. If your soil isn't healthy, your lawn and gardens won't be healthy.



Find out your soil's pH and other characteristics by sending a sample to the soil lab at the University of Massachusetts. For a small fee, you will receive an analysis and recommendations for improving your soil. Some local nurseries also provide soil sample analyses.

<http://soiltest.umass.edu/> or call 413-545-2311



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Rain gardens and water quality

FACT SHEET

What's the problem?

When rain falls on impervious surfaces such as rooftops, roads, parking lots and driveways, it runs off into storm drains and into our rivers and streams. Stormwater runoff picks up pollution such as fertilizer, pesticides, sediment, motor oil, litter, and pet and yard waste as it flows over hard surfaces. The pollution in stormwater runoff then ends up in our streams and rivers.

How can a rain garden help?

A rain garden looks like a regular perennial garden in many ways. It is designed with deep-rooted plants that come back year after year; it is pretty to look at and it often has lovely flowers, grasses, trees and shrubs. So what makes it different from any other perennial garden? Rain gardens soak up stormwater and keep it from running off into storm drains. There are certain qualities that make a rain garden unique:

- Rain gardens have areas where water pools and have plants that can tolerate periodic wet feet.
- Rain gardens absorb and filter rain, and reduce stormwater runoff.
- Rain gardens are often planted with species native to the region, which require less attention once they are established.
- Rain gardens are often located adjacent to hard surfaces, such as parking lots and driveways, and catch water running off those surfaces.
- Rain gardens mimic the functions of nature's forests and meadows, by soaking up rainwater and slowing runoff and flooding.

What are other rain garden benefits?

In addition to reducing and filtering stormwater runoff, rain gardens provide many other benefits. They provide habitat for wildlife and, with the proper selection of plants, increase the number and diversity of birds and butterflies for those who enjoy watching them. Rain gardens provide an attractive and creative alternative to traditional lawn landscapes and require less maintenance because they do not need to be mowed, fertilized, or watered once established. They may also increase property values with creative landscaping designs.

Source: <https://ag.umass.edu/fact-sheets/rain-gardens-way-to-improve-water-quality>



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Trees and water quality

FACT SHEET

What's the problem?

In nature, trees play an important role in soaking up rain water and slowing flooding and runoff. In populated settings where there are more impermeable surfaces (think roads, sidewalks, driveways and rooftops) and fewer trees, stormwater runs off onto paved surfaces and takes with it pollutants such as road salt, pet waste, yard chemicals, and much more. This runoff flows into storm drains and on into our streams and rivers.

How can planting trees help?

Trees are valued for their beauty and many other benefits they provide to our yards and neighborhoods. Additionally, trees are increasingly recognized for their importance in managing runoff from stormwater. The leaves of trees help reduce erosion caused by falling rain. Tree leaves also provide surface area where rain water lands and can evaporate. Tree roots take up water and help create conditions in the soil that promote infiltration. All these stormwater benefits decrease water pollution and decrease the costs to municipalities for stormwater treatment

Plant your own tree today, or request a free tree for your front yard or tree belt in Greenfield:

janineg@greenfield-ma.gov
OR 413-772-1528 x 6106

Availability of free trees dependent on funding. If not available, your name will be added to a waiting list.

What are other benefits of trees?

- Trees are **cool**! Did you know the cooling effect of a young healthy tree is about the same as ten room-sized air conditioners operating 20 hours per day?
- How about a boost to your **property value**? Studies show that having mature trees in front of your home increases its value- often as much as 10% to 20%.
- Want to go for a **walk**? Tree-lined streets encourage people to walk in their communities- and to walk further than they otherwise would!
- Trees are **good for business**! In retail/commercial areas or streets with trees, shoppers spend more time and money and come back more often compared with areas or streets without trees.
- Trees are a breath of fresh air! Trees improve **air quality** by absorbing pollutants from the air in their leaves and bark.
- Are you stressed out? There is a proven link between mental health and **wellbeing** and the presence of trees and green spaces.



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Pet waste & water quality FACT SHEET



What's the problem?

Scooping your pooch's poop isn't just a nice thing to do for those walking behind you; it is also the healthy and environmentally sound thing to do. Pet waste can be a source of water pollution. When pet waste is not properly disposed of, it can be carried by rain or melting snow runoff into storm drains. Storm drains in our streets and neighborhoods usually flow directly into our streams and rivers.

Animal waste can become a source of harmful bacteria and nutrients in water. Just as we don't want human sewage in our water, it is important to prevent pet waste from being carried into our streams and rivers.

What are other water pollutants?

Dog waste is only one of many pollutants from our neighborhoods that can be washed into storm drains by rain water. Lawn fertilizers, motor oil, driveway sand and salt, and soapy water from washing cars in driveways commonly end up in streams and rivers.

Tell friends and neighbors about the effect of animal waste on the environment and our health. Encourage them to clean up after their pets and to dispose of the pet waste properly!

Here's what you can do:

- Carry plastic bags with you when you walk your dog. Re-using a plastic newspaper or grocery bag works well. Or, carry a pet waste scooper.
- Use the bag like a glove and pick up the pet waste, turn the bag inside out around the waste, seal the bag, and dispose of it in a trash can. Or flush **un-bagged** pet waste down the toilet.
- Don't place the bagged or un-bagged pet waste in a storm drain, as storm drains flow directly to our rivers and streams.
- If you have a large yard, you may bury **un-bagged** pet waste in a hole at least 5 inches deep and away from vegetable gardens and waterways.



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Disposal of Household Hazardous Materials

FACT SHEET

What's the problem?

Even small amounts of motor oil, antifreeze, paint, and other household hazardous waste can pollute streams and rivers, if not properly disposed of. According to Greenfield's DPW, first consider using up the product according to package directions, or giving it away to someone who will. Read the product label to determine if the product is considered hazardous, thus requiring special handling. Look for warnings and words like caustic, toxic, corrosive, danger and "keep out of reach of children." For unwanted products requiring special disposal, visit the following links:



In Greenfield:

Greenfield DPW's Transfer Station

<http://greenfield-ma.gov/p/280/Recycling--Solid-Waste--Transfer-Station>

413-772-1528 or janineg@greenfield-ma.gov

In other Franklin County towns:

Franklin County Solid Waste Management District (FCSWMG)

<http://www.franklincountywastedistrict.org/hazardouswaste.html>

(413) 772-2438 or amy@franklincountywastedistrict.org

Tips from FCSWMG's Website on Safely Transporting your Household Hazardous Waste

- Keep product in its original container. If in a different container, label it. Make sure lids are secure.
- Place containers in a plastic bin or box with a lid, and keep them from tipping or leaking.
- Keep waste out of the passenger compartment of your vehicle and away from children and pets. If transporting waste in a truck, secure the load with ties to prevent the load from shifting.
- Do not mix different types of waste in the same containers.



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