



Healthy Lawn, Healthy Water



A healthy lawn can improve water quality by filtering, purifying, and reducing stormwater runoff. Here are some tips to keep our lawns and waterways healthy:

- Test Before You Treat: a simple soil test can determine if fertilizer is necessary. If your lawn is lacking certain nutrients, try to use a fertilizer with slow-release nitrogen and make sure it contains zero phosphorus.
- If you need to add any sort of fertilizer or chemical to your lawn, make sure the forecast is clear! Rain will wash those extra nutrients and/or chemicals into our waterways.
- Not all bugs are bad: inspect your lawn and gardens regularly to catch a problem early. If you find a pest, identify them to see if they are harmful or helpful. Try non-chemical controls first. 
- Plant disease-resistant grass species.
- Cut grass no less than 3 inches in height.
- Keep mower blades sharp. Shredding grass blade tips invites disease.
- In the fall, mow over your leaves a few times to break them down into mulch, providing a natural fertilizer for your lawn. 





More Healthy Lawn, Healthy Water Tips:

- Water early in the morning to conserve water and promote plant health.
- If possible, leave a buffer of vegetation between storm drains, streams, or any other water bodies.
- Encourage infiltration of runoff water from your roof and driveway. Direct down spouts to a rain garden or infiltration point where vegetation will filter nutrients from the water.
- If planting a rain garden, use native plants that require less frequent care after establishment and have deeper roots.
- Use a rain barrel to collect water from your gutters to use on your lawn and gardens. This is also a great way to save money!
- Manage thatch: if your lawn has a thick layer of decomposing plant tissue, this could lead to disease, insect problems, drought stress, and winter injury. Use core aeration to allow for more oxygen, water, and nutrients to reach the root system.

**Ontario-Wayne
Stormwater Coalition**
www.owsc.org

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