

## Clean water – we need it to survive

*Rivers, streams, creeks, ponds, lakes, reservoirs — the metro area’s waterways are some of our most precious resources. They provide drinking water, recreation, and wildlife habitat. But only if the water remains clean and unpolluted.*

*This brochure offers ways to care for your lawn and garden that will help prevent water pollution and keep our streams, rivers, and lakes clear and clean.*



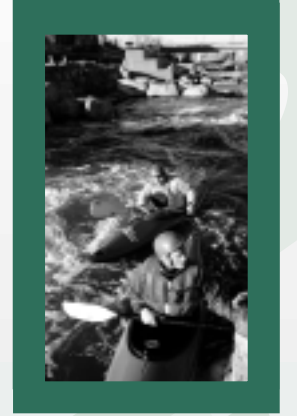
The gutter in the street outside your home carries water into a network of storm drains that lead straight to local creeks and rivers. Storm drains are separate from the sanitary sewer system (which handles wastewater from your sinks, tubs, and toilets). Unlike wastewater, stormwater is not treated at a sewage treatment plant. Stormwater goes directly from the storm drainage system into local creeks and rivers.

Anything on the sidewalks and streets, such as grass clippings, leaves, pet waste, trash, or excess fertilizer, is carried away by runoff and ends up in storm drains, where it flows into rivers, lakes, and streams.



## What you do makes a difference!

You might not think that you can help solve the problem, but you can! Lawn and garden chemicals, such as insecticides, pesticides, and fertilizers, contaminate the stormwater if used improperly. Soil in bare, unlandscaped areas can be washed away during heavy rains, polluting the water with sediment.



## A healthy lawn helps water quality

Caring for your lawn and garden properly helps keep our water quality high. Research has shown that healthy lawns help:

- ◆ Improve water quality
- ◆ Prevent soil erosion
- ◆ Reduce air pollution
- ◆ Provide wildlife habitat

Why? Because healthy, dense lawns absorb rainfall, reducing runoff and erosion.

## Caring for your lawn and garden

### Leave grass clippings on the lawn

A healthy, established lawn with recycled clippings needs little or no additional phosphorus fertilizer.

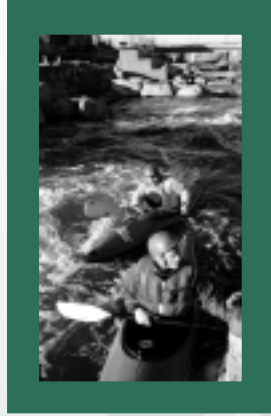
### Apply fertilizer sparingly and at the right time

Excess fertilizer washes off and ends up in stormwater. Be sure to apply fertilizer in early October before the grass goes dormant. If the grass is dormant, it can't take up the fertilizer, so it escapes to our creeks and reservoirs.

## Not all pollution is intentional

We all need to do our part to protect local waterways from pollution. What you may not realize is that much of the pollution is unintentional, caused by the things that we do everyday — at work, at home, at play.





### **Recycle yard waste**

Recycle yard wastes, such as leaves, grass clippings, and weeds, by composting. Remove dead leaves promptly, so that they don't wash into the storm drains during rains.

### **Mow your grass frequently**

Frequent mowing can help the grass choke out weeds. Mow frequently enough to avoid cutting off more than one inch (1") of the grass blade.

### **Avoid overwatering**

Overwatering isn't healthy for your lawn. It wastes water and the excess runoff can carry pollution into the storm drainage system. Check with the local water department or county extension service for watering tips.

### **Use alternatives to insecticides and pesticides**

Consider using non-chemical methods for controlling pests. For example, you can use beneficial insects such as ladybugs. Ask your lawn care company if they offer Integrated Pest Management (IPM) services as an alternative to harmful chemicals.

### **Store your lawn and garden chemicals properly**

Store insecticides, herbicides, fertilizer, and gasoline in a secure, covered area to prevent accidental poisonings and contamination of runoff.

### **Dispose of lawn and garden chemicals properly**

Use your local recycling center (where available). Take advantage of local household chemical round-ups. Buy only what you need. Never pour chemicals into the storm drains — it's illegal and it pollutes the water.

### **Landscaping your lawn**

#### **Landscape bare areas**

Rain, snow melt, and wind can erode exposed soil. Soil washed into the storm drains pollutes our waterways with sediment.

#### **Landscape with native and xeriscape plants**

Plant alternatives to bluegrass lawns, such as buffalo grass. This not only conserves water, but lowers fertilizer and pesticide requirements. Native plants are better adapted to our climate and more capable of surviving without chemical assistance.



## **Remember...**

**Water runs downhill.**

**Water picks up everything.**

**Water flows to our rivers, streams, and creeks.**

**Do your part to keep our water clean!**

**Dumping liquid or solid waste into a storm drain or creek is a crime! If you see illegal dumping, report it!**

**Broomfield  
303-464-5648**

**Golden  
303-384-8181**

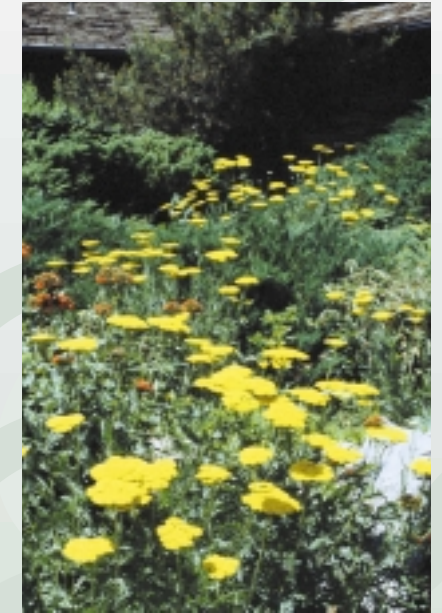
**Wheat Ridge  
303-235-2861**

**Westminster  
303-430-2400 x3362**

**Jefferson County  
303-271-8454**

**Arvada  
720-898-7810**

**CLEAR CHOICES  
FOR CLEAN WATER**



# **Caring for Your Lawn and Garden**

*This brochure was created by and used with the permission of the City and County of Denver, the City of Aurora, the City of Lakewood and the Urban Drainage and Flood Control District.*