



# Yard Care Tips and Best Practices

There are many ways to care for your yard and garden without harming our freshwater resources. Changing the methods and the products you use are great ways to reduce the amount of stormwater pollution that runs off from your property.



## Fertilizer

- If you typically apply fertilizer to your lawn, get a soil test first to determine what nutrients it really needs.
- Keep in mind that fertilizer is most effective when used in the late spring (May-June) or mid-fall.
- Fertilizing too often or inappropriately can result in excess nutrients that can cause oxygen reduction.



## Alternatives

- If you're looking for an alternative to the traditional fertilizers and pesticides, there are two common programs that are recommended – organic or reduced-risk.
- Find more information on these options on the Respect Our Waters website.



## Mulch

- Mulch leaves into your yard instead of raking them. Use shredded yard waste, such as grass clippings or leaves, as a mulch cover for your garden beds.
- Always chop leaves before using them as mulch so that water can still reach the soil in the winter.



## Bag Leaves

- Raking them into the street or the gutter will cause blockages in storm sewers and drains.
- Most municipalities have information on bagging and pickup schedules on their websites.