

## Solutions to Water Pollution for Lawn Care Professionals



A guide for the commercial landscaping & lawn care industry for a cleaner environment .



## Landscaping

Major causes of pollution in our waterways can be attributed to landscaping and garden maintenance activities. Soils, yard wastes, over-watering and garden chemicals become part of the urban runoff mix that winds its way through streets, gutters, and storm drains before entering local waterways.



Leaves, grass clippings and tree trimmings that are swept or blown into the street and storm drains are pollutants and also create a hazard for motorists. These materials clog storm drains and increase the risk of flooding on our streets. As they decompose, they also absorb oxygen that fish need to survive. Blowing or sweeping lawn waste into storm drains or ditches is a violation of the City of Asheville Pollution Ordinance.

The water from the storm drains is directly discharged into local waterways without any treatment, resulting in the pollution of water we use for swimming, fishing and as a source of drinking water.

This brochure is dedicated to raising awareness of pollution prevention to protect water quality. The following Best Management Practices (BMPs) for landscaping practices will help minimize water pollution while providing your customers a healthy and attractive lawn and landscape.

## Design & Installation

Design a landscape that reduces runoff and encourages natural infiltration of rain.

- Minimize impervious areas.
- Do not allow bare soil areas in the landscape.
- Incorporate native vegetation into the landscape design when possible and select plants best adapted to the local climate, soils and growing conditions.
- Choose turf grass that is heat and drought tolerant.



## Applying Pesticides

- Read the pesticide label BEFORE you purchase, handle or apply it. The label provides safe usage and storage information. It is dangerous and illegal to not use as directed.
- Store pesticides, fertilizers, and other chemicals in a covered area to prevent runoff.
- Obtain a North Carolina Pesticide Applicators License. For more information visit:  
[www.ncagr.gov/SPCAP/pesticides/license](http://www.ncagr.gov/SPCAP/pesticides/license)



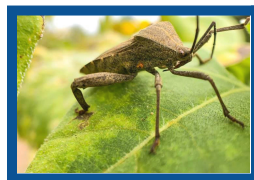
***Small changes in behavior can make a big impact on water quality!***

## Applying Fertilizer

- Do not apply fertilizer if heavy rain is predicted.
- Avoid fertilizing during periods of limited rainfall. Fertilizers are chemical salts and can dehydrate drought-stressed plant roots.
- Apply only the amount of fertilizer that the turf or plant requires.
- Use slow release fertilizers whenever possible to minimize leaching.
- Immediately sweep pavement and sidewalk if fertilizer is spilled on these surfaces.
- Around waterways, use a deflector shield with spreaders. Avoid throwing granules in water and leave a three-foot buffer of unfertilized turf.

## Integrated Pest Management

- Integrated Pest Management (IPM), a practice used by leading professional landscape companies, integrates a regular monitoring program with correct diagnosis of pest problems. It promotes the use of cultural, biological and mechanical means of controlling pests. It advocates intervention with pesticides only when necessary to avoid serious damage.
- The key to a successful IPM program is frequent inspection and accurate diagnosis of pests.
- Remove insects by hand and place in soapy water or vegetable oil. Alternatively, remove insects with water or vacuum them off the plants.



- Cultural control methods include proper planting methods, plant selection and maintenance practices such as using pest-resistant plant varieties.

## Grass Clippings & Leaves

- **Don't blow, sweep or dump grass clippings or leaves into the street, down storm drains or drainage ditches.**
- Properly maintained turf grass improves soil structure, stabilizes topsoil and reduces erosion and runoff.
- Mulching leaves into the turf with a mulching mower can also be beneficial.
- Compost plant clippings, leaves, excess grass clippings and other plant material. Info on City composting options can be found at: [www.ashevillenc.gov/compost](http://www.ashevillenc.gov/compost) including how to backyard compost and how to access free backyard compost bin materials.
- Reuse compost in your landscape maintenance. The use of compost improves soil texture and structure, moisture retention and adds valuable nutrients.
- City **residential** waste customers may set out brush and containerized leaves per brush collection guidelines found at: [www.ashevillenc.gov/service/dispose-of-leaves-brush-or-christmas-trees](http://www.ashevillenc.gov/service/dispose-of-leaves-brush-or-christmas-trees)



If you have questions please contact City of Asheville Stormwater Services at 828-232-4567.