

## **Summer Lawn and Landscape tips**

Here are some tips for protecting water quality in our lakes, creeks and wetlands during the season when we use them most.

**Summer is prime time for maintaining cars and boats, but some activities can harm our lakes, creeks and wetlands. Here's how to prevent that:**

- Avoid washing your car at home, where the dirty soapy water flows into ditches. Commercial car washes are an environmentally friendly alternative because their wash water drains into sanitary sewers and is treated before discharge.
- Bring used motor oil to a free drop off site. Never spill gasoline, motor oil, washer fluid, antifreeze or other products on hard surfaces. They will flow through ditches to our lakes, creeks and wetlands and poison fish, plants and other aquatic life.
- Don't litter and please recycle bottles and cans. Put trash from your car in the garbage. Shake and wash floor mats over your lawn, not hard surfaces.

**When soil washes down ditches it flows into our lakes, creeks and wetlands. Soil particles contain phosphorus. In the water, phosphorus feeds algae and lowers water quality. Here's what you can do to keep soil out of the water:**

- Keep your lawn healthy and reseed any bare spots. Plant flowers or other ground covers in open soil.
- If you have a Blooming Boulevard, maintain a turf border or edging around it to keep the soil in place.
- When you're done with yard work, clean your lawn and garden equipment on the grass, not on hard surfaces. Sweep up soil and grass clippings. Never wash or blow them into the street.

**There's phosphorus in organic debris too, so it lowers water quality as well. Here's how to keep organic debris out of our lakes, creeks and wetlands:**

- Near hard surfaces, use wood shavings or other organic mulches that knit together when wet and stay in place during heavy rains.

- Leaves twigs, tree flowers and other organic debris accumulate on roofs and gutters. Keep it from washing into the street by directing your downspouts away from buildings and onto grass or ground cover, where the nutrients will be absorbed and recycled. If you live near a storm sewer grate, remove debris after every rain. Bag it and place it in the garbage. Be sure to wear gloves.
- Debris can clog storm drains and cause street flooding.
- Pet waste can contain harmful bacteria as well as nutrients. Pick up feces promptly. Double bag them and put them in the garbage. Never drop feces in the street or in ditches.

**One more tip for protecting our lakes, creeks and wetlands:**

- Don't apply fertilizer or treat dandelions during the hot days of the summer. Fall is the best time to fertilize your lawn and treat broadleaf weeds.