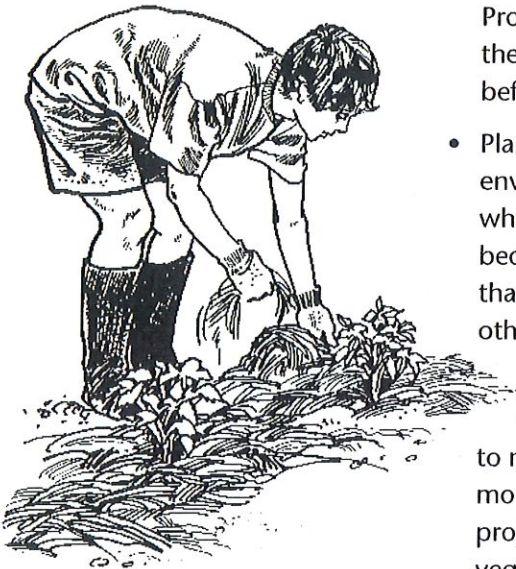


PRACTICAL TIPS FOR CLEAN WATER

Whether you live in the city or the country . . . whether your home is large or small . . . whether you have a lot of time and money to invest in your yard or just a little, there is something you can do to improve water quality. The following suggestions are ways that you can make a contribution to clean water and a healthy environment.

Around your home

- Mow often enough to leave grass clippings on the lawn.
- Keep fallen leaves out of the streetside gutter or ditch, using them around the yard as practical. Properly place the remainder near the curb (not in the street) just before municipal collection.
- Plant an extra tree for multiple environmental benefits, especially where it becomes part of a planting bed or “naturalized” landscape area that recycles leaves, twigs, and other yard “wastes.”
 - Seed bare soil and cover it with a mulch as soon as possible to minimize erosion. Disturb no more ground than necessary for a project, while preserving existing vegetation.
- Direct roof downspouts away from foundations and driveways to planting beds and lawns where the water can safely soak into the ground. Use a rain barrel where practical.
- Use lawn and garden chemicals carefully and sparingly. Pesticides, including weed killers, should be considered a last resort – other controls come first.
- Limit the use of toxic or hazardous products in general. Keep them away from storm sewers, lakes, and streams.
- Collect oil and other automotive products preferably for recycling, or tightly seal and wrap them for proper disposal.
- Wash cars on the lawn, where soapy water can’t quickly run toward the nearest storm sewer, picking up other pollutants as it goes.
- Keep cars tuned up and in good operating condition. Check for drips and repair leaks immediately to keep nuisance oils off pavement. Better yet, walk, bike or take the bus.
- For waterfront property, grow a “buffer strip” of dense, natural vegetation along the water’s edge to filter pollutants and stabilize the shoreline.
- If using a septic tank system, maintain it properly through regular inspections and licensed pumping every two to three years.
- Monitor fuel use from any underground gas and oil tanks to make sure they are not leaking.
- Plan your landscape with environmental health in mind, reducing the area that is heavily maintained.
- Clean up pet wastes, from which nutrients and bacteria could be washed toward lakes and streams.
- Conservatively use salt in winter. Substitute sand or old-fashioned “chipping” when possible.



If you have excess grass clippings, use the clippings as a mulch or compost them along with leaves that might otherwise “fertilize” local waters.