

Green and Growing!

When you think about water pollution does your lawn or garden ever come to mind?

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) names non-point source pollution as the major contributor to water degradation. Rainfall, as if flows across your lawn or garden, picks up excess fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides and deposits them in area creeks and lakes. It is hard to imagine your one little lawn as having any kind of impact on area waterways and as it stands alone, the impact may be minimal but the USEPA estimates that North American households use 136 million pounds of pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers every year. That amounts to 10 times more per acre than farmers use for crops.

The natural approach to lawn care will require you to back up and look at the lawn as a whole community of organisms dependent on each other. A healthy lawn requires biological activity in the soil. Microorganisms and beneficial bugs break down organic matter while earthworms keep the soil aerated with their tunnels and feed on dead and decaying matter. A healthy lawn is not necessarily a “perfect” lawn but an attractive, inviting lawn just the same.

For more information on environmental protection and stewardship contact:

The City of Moberly
Stormwater Pollution Prevention
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Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program

City of
Moberly!

“Green”
Lawn Care



Pollution Prevention Through
Education and Involvement

Tips for a Greener Lawn

- ✓ Develop and maintain a healthy soil. Test your soil BEFORE applying fertilizers. Over fertilizing will do more harm than good.
- ✓ Use a grass that is suitable for your area. Tall fescue does well in Missouri. Mix with other grasses so as to prevent a single disease from wiping out your entire lawn.
- ✓ Allow a little clover; it fixes nitrogen in the lawn.
- ✓ Set your mower to 3 or 4 inches, or the highest setting. Mowing high will produce a healthier grass with fewer pest problems. The grass will grow thicker and develop a deeper root system allowing for better drought tolerance and disease resistance.
- ✓ Keep your mower blades sharp. A sharp blade will make a clean cut preventing tearing and injury.
- ✓ Top dress the lawn with finished compost in the spring or fall.
- ✓ Overseed by sprinkling grass seed throughout the lawn in the spring and fall. This will help fill in bare spots and choke out the weeds.

Yard Waste Ordinance

In July, 2006, the Moberly City Council adopted an ordinance directly addressing yard wastes deposited on the city streets. This ordinance has little to do with the aesthetic value of clean streets, but rather was implemented to protect property and the environment.

Grass clippings, leaves and plant prunings are a significant source of problems and pollution when allowed to wash into storm drains. Yard wastes that enter the storm drain system will decrease the flow capacity and/or cause blockages, increasing the risk of street and basement flooding. Yard wastes that find their way through the storm drain system enter local creeks and lakes. As this organic matter decomposes it uses up the oxygen required by aquatic life. The excess nutrients promote algae growth further depleting the oxygen supply. Improperly discarded yard wastes create problems in the street, in the storm drain system and in local creeks and lakes.



Yard Waste Solutions

- ✓ Use a mulching lawn mower to chop leaves and grass clippings. When left on the lawn they serve as a source of slow-release nutrients and build soil organic matter. Most standard mowers can be retrofitted with a mulching blade kit.
- ✓ Leaves and grass clippings can also be used as mulch in flower and vegetable gardens. Mulch is valuable in conserving soil moisture, regulating soil temperature and suppressing weeds while building soil organic matter.
- ✓ Start a compost pile. Leaves, grass clippings and plant prunings along with (vegetable) kitchen wastes are easily composted and are a valuable soil conditioner.
- ✓ The City has a yard waste collection site at the City Street Barn. Grass clippings, leaves, plant prunings and small limbs will be accepted. Composted material can also be picked up at the City Street Barn.