

CONCORD TOWNSHIP STORM WATER TIPS FOR FALL AND WINTER

Yard debris, including leaves and other organic plant materials like shrubbery trimmings and grass clippings can be a significant source of stormwater pollution when allowed to leave your property and enter storm drains, carrying fertilizers and pesticides to rivers and streams.... plus, they can clog the storm drains!

For Fall, consider adopting these practices for your home. Some nice side effects are that you will save money and time:

- Use a mulching lawn mower to send those grass clippings and light shredded leaf litter back to the soil.
- Don't use your hose as a broom. Sweep up yard debris rather than washing it down the driveway or street.
- Pile up two inches of remaining leaf mulch to flower beds and around trees to suppress weed growth, improve soil structure, and reduce the need for fertilizer.
- Compost or recycle the remainder of your yard waste.
- If you fertilize your lawn, do it in the fall rather than springtime. Fall fertilizations promote vigorous root growth and prevent fertilizer from leaching into our streams.
- Choose fertilizers with "slow release" forms of nitrogen which are less likely to leach untreated from your yard through the storm drains into our rivers, creeks, and streams.
- Read and follow manufacturer's instructions. More is not better!

During the Winter months, it is completely understandable to think of safety first when it comes to ice and snow, but if at all possible, consider adopting these practices to reduce excess salt and other deicing chemicals that can harm aquatic life in our streams and impact drinking water supplies:

- Shovel snow before it turns to ice to limit the need for deicing chemicals like rock salt.
- Shovel snow onto non-paved surfaces such as landscaped and/or grassy areas. As the snow melts, it will soak into the ground rather than flow directly into a nearby storm drain or stream.
- Sand, sawdust, and even clean kitty litter can be used as an environmentally-friendly alternative to commonly used salt products. Cracked corn has been suggested as an alternative because animals can eat it before it gets washed into the storm sewers in the spring.
- After a snowmelt, sweep up residues, including sand, to prevent it from washing into storm drains and streams.
- Using the old fashioned approach of a shovel means eliminating ice and snow without harmful chemicals with all the added benefits of physical exercise.