

6 Use trees and shrubs to filter runoff. A strip of bushes and trees, know as a buffer, can act as a sponge and filter out contaminants that wash from your driveway, roof and yard. Since water flows downhill, it is important for the buffer to be planted down slope of your home in order to help filter the runoff from your yard. Using native shrubs and vegetation will tend to be hardier and last longer.

7 Use less fertilizer. Over fertilizing your lawn and garden can result in excess of phosphorus; and other nutrients can cause algae blooms in our lakes and contaminate groundwater. Try using lime and organic mulch as an alternative.

8 Reduce. Reuse. Recycle. By reducing the amount of chemicals we use, reusing lawn clippings for mulch and recycling materials like compost into fertilizer we can improve the water quality.



Clean water starts with you!

For additional information contact:

Missouri Dept. of Natural Resources
<http://www.dnr.mo.gov/env/swcp/>

Missouri Water Quality Association
<http://www.mowqa.org/>

Mo-Kan Regional Council
<http://www.mo-kan.org>

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8 Simple Steps To Cleaner Water

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Clean water begins with you-and me-and all of us working together.

Clean water is important to everyone living in Missouri. If you take a look around you will realize that water surrounds our home, our yard and our communities. We're all in it together and here are 8 simple steps to help make our water cleaner.

Let's first understand our watersheds. A watershed is the land area in which water is collected. This water then flows with the help of gravity to another body of water which flows to another body of water such as a stream or lake.

Polluted storm water = the culprit. The main polluter of clean water is us. Every time it rains, the rainwater washes off driveways, parking lots, roofs, roads and other surfaces carrying with it contaminants to our streams, lakes oceans and groundwater. Each and every one of us can help and here is how.

1 Prevent Soil Erosion. Soil erosion is the single greatest threat to water quality. It carries nutrients, fills in our streams and ponds and damages fish habitat. To prevent soil erosion, minimize disturbed areas during construction projects and seed and mulch bare soil quickly.

2 Compost your waste. To avoid damaging or overloading your septic system, compost food waste. Composting lets you develop great topsoil for your lawn and garden. So start a compost pile....it's easy! Additional information can be found at: <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/FEATURE/backyard/compost.html>

3 Keep your lawn small. Large lawns might look nice, but Mother Nature sees it differently. Lawns shed more water than forested areas thus increasing the amount of water leaving your yard and carrying contaminants to nearby streams and lakes.

4 Dispose of chemicals properly. Chemicals should not be poured down the sink or dumped in your backyard. Recycle oil and antifreeze. Let solvents evaporate in their containers and then dispose of the residue. Use and dispose of chemicals according to the directions on their labels and use safer alternatives.

5 Maintain your septic system. Septic tanks require attention. Inadequate septic systems account for 5-10% of all phosphorus that reaches some lakes. In addition, toxins, nitrates, nutrients, bacteria and viruses from inadequate septic systems can seep into nearby wells. This pollution can also flow into our streams and harm lakes. Some helpful tips include: Don't use septic system additives, pour grease or food down your sink, and try to pump your system every one or two years.