



THE MAIN DRAIN

STORMWATER NEWS YOU CAN USE

A Publication of the Portsmouth Department of Public Utilities/Public Works -

Division of Stormwater Management

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Yard Care for a Clean Environment

Throughout Portsmouth, stormwater drainage systems are collecting rainwater during rain storms. Made up of ditches, ponds, drainage structures, and underground pipes, these drainage systems quickly channel rain water from city streets directly into waterways.

Unfortunately, on its urban voyage, rain picks up all types of pollutants and carries them to waterways. This form of pollution is stormwater runoff and it is a by-product of our daily lives. What we put out, the rain picks up, and runoff has become the leading cause of water pollution in our nation today. One goal of Portsmouth's Stormwater Management Program is to work toward eliminating these pollutants from entering our storm drains, thereby protecting our local water bodies.

There are many factors that contribute to the pollution of our waterways. A significant one is improper lawn care, which can cause non-point source pollutants such as fertilizers, pesticides, grass clippings, and yard waste to enter our lakes, streams, rivers, wetlands, bays, and oceans through the storm drains. These pollutants can contaminate our drinking water, kill fish and marine life, and prevent us from enjoying water as a natural resource.

In order to minimize these pollutants in our waterways, there are several easy things you can do:

Your Soil

- Avoid over-fertilization. Have your soil tested for pH level, fertility, and composition every two years. This will show how much fertilizer you will need. Call your local Virginia Cooperative Extension agent at 393-5197 for testing information.

Your Lawn

- Mow your lawn to the proper height, depending on your grass type (Bermudagrass and Zoysiagrass: 1 to 1.5"; Centipedegrass: 2 to 2.5"; and St. Augustinegrass and Fescue: 2.5 to 3"). Contact your local Virginia Cooperative Extension agent for more information at 393-5197.
- Leave your grass clippings on the lawn after you mow. They provide a natural fertilizer for your lawn as they decompose and, despite common beliefs, will not create thatch.
- Recycle your grass clippings. Grass clippings are a major part of Virginia's municipal solid waste stream.

Using Fertilizers

- If rain or wind is in the forecast, choose to fertilize another day.
- Use recommended application rates and time intervals.
- Use slow-release granular fertilizers rather than liquids. They leach less and work longer.



Stormwater runoff brings fertilizers & other nutrients from area lawns into our local waterways. The result is excess algae blooms, which deplete the oxygen necessary for marine life to survive.

STORMWATER
TIP OF THE
MONTH:

"Stash the Trash"

Secure trash in the can for curbside disposal to keep litter from blowing into streets, drains, or ditches.

