

Springtime Choices Impact Our Local Water Quality

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There are plenty of signs that spring is in full force. Sometime these signs are natural indicators like flowers poking through weathered mulch, or migrating birds, like sandhill cranes flying far overhead. Others are signs of human life awakening after winter. Signs like people cleaning up boats, or washing cars and bikes in their drives, or the often dreaded spring yard clean-up. All can bring potential risks to local water quality.



As you are preparing your home and yard this spring, be sure to consider the impacts your lawn has on water quality. Your individual choices and actions make a difference!

Your Lawn Fertilizer Choices

Many mature lawns do not need fertilizers, particularly fertilizer with phosphorus in it. *Remember one pound of phosphorus running off into the water can grow 500 pounds of algae.*

- ✓ Follow the instructions on the bag and use only the right amount. More is not better! Any fertilizer that is not used by your lawn will end up in local stream or reservoir – growing potentially toxic algae and producing bad tasting water.
- ✓ If you use a lawn care company, make sure to talk to them about no-phosphorus fertilizer and minimum application rates throughout the season.
- ✓ If you are already using no-phosphorus fertilizer, or no fertilizer at all, or if you are asking your applicator to use no-P products, **take the no-phosphorus pledge** at www.ClearChoicesCleanWater.org.



Check it out to see how many people are on the map – take the pledge to show your support for healthy Indiana waters and get on the map yourself!

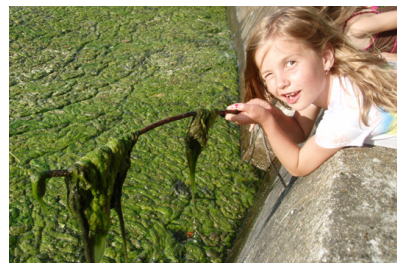
Your Yard Clean-up Choices

There are several natural ‘fertilizers’ and pollutants that accumulate over the winter, decompose, and find their way into the water as well. Leaf litter, pet waste, and general landscaping yard waste all contain nutrients such as phosphorus that can add to spring and summer algal blooms.

- ✓ Please bag or compost – do not rake leaves or other yard waste like last year’s flower stalks or grass clippings into ponds, streams, drainage ditches, or storm drains!
- ✓ Pick up and dispose of pet waste in the garbage!

Other simple spring-cleaning backyard behaviors like car or boat washing and oil changes can also be a significant source of nutrients and other pollutants to the local streams and drinking water supplies.

- Used oil from a single oil change can pollute up to 1,000,000 gallons of freshwater.
- In order for one ounce of biodegradable detergent to be safe for fish, it needs to be diluted by almost 20,000 ounces of water.



These pollutants get to the reservoir through direct runoff from yards or street-side storm drain inlets that discharge, untreated, to nearby streams, or to the reservoir itself.

Consider the choices you are making around your home as you begin spring yard work. Protecting local water quality in the City of Carmel requires everyone to do their part to make sure their property doesn’t contribute pollution to our water supplies. *You can make a difference – make a clear choice for clean water!*