

STORMWATER MANAGEMENT HELPFUL HINTS

THE TOWN OF HOLLISTON INSTITUTED A STORMWATER MANAGEMENT PLAN. PART OF THAT PLAN IS TO HELP EDUCATE THE PUBLIC IN EFFECTIVE METHODS TO PREVENT POLLUTION OF STORMWATER. BELOW IS SOME HELPFUL INFORMATION FOR HOMEOWNERS TO USE TO REDUCE THE AMOUNT OF POLLUTANTS THAT ENTER INTO OUR WATER SYSTEM.

Water Conservation Practices for Homeowners

Homeowners can practice good water use habits by being aware of daily activities that consume a large volume of water. Some water conservation practices that can be recommended include: Run the dishwasher and laundry machines only with full loads. Use the shortest wash and rinse cycles and the lowest water level setting possible. Avoid the permanent press cycle, which uses an additional 10 to 20 gallons of water.

- When hand-washing dishes, do not let the water run continuously.
- When buying a new washing machine, choose a suds-saver model.
- In the bathrooms, place two half-gallon plastic bottles filled with water in the toilet tank to reduce the amount of flush water used.
- Take shorter showers and use a water-conserving showerhead (less than 2.5 gallons per minute) rather than taking baths, which use 30 to 50 gallons of water.
- When shaving, brushing teeth, or washing your face, do not let the water run continuously.
- When washing your car, use a bucket, and wash and rinse sections individually. Use a high-pressure, low-volume hose with a nozzle.
- Water the lawn only when absolutely necessary. More water is consumed using sprinkler and irrigation systems than if a hand-held hose is used. (Trickle irrigation systems and soaker hoses are 20 percent more efficient than sprinklers.) Water lawns only during the coolest time of day to avoid evaporation of the water.



Fixing a leaky sink can help conserve water (Source: Louisiana USA , 1997)

Benefits - The greatest benefit of water conservation in the home is cost savings. By reducing the amount of water used, monthly water bills are reduced. If homes are served by septic systems, reducing water use reduces the amount of wastewater to be treated, thereby minimizing strain on the system and improving pollutant removal performance. By following these suggested water conservation measures, water use in the home can be reduced. The cumulative effects of using water conservation practices can significantly reduce the burden on water storage, purification, distribution, and treatment facilities. Water conservation is not only "environmentally friendly," but it is also very economical.

Pet Waste Management

When pet waste is not properly disposed of, it can wash into nearby water bodies or can be carried by runoff into storm drains. Since storm drains do not connect to treatment facilities, but rather drain directly into lakes and streams, untreated animal feces can become a significant source of runoff pollution. As pet waste decays in a water body, it uses up oxygen, sometimes releasing ammonia. Low oxygen levels and ammonia combined with warm temperatures can be detrimental to the health of fish and other aquatic life. Pet waste also contains nutrients that promote weed and algae growth (eutrophication). Eutrophic water becomes cloudy and green, making it unattractive or even prohibitive for swimming and recreation. Pet waste also carries bacteria, viruses, and parasites that can pose risks to human health and threaten wildlife.

- The Town has a By-law which require pet owners to clean up after their pets.
- The Town By-law also prohibits pets from all school property and town owned fields.



Encourage pet owners to collect their animal's waste so it will not wash into sewers and streams

Benefits - The benefits of pet waste management include a cleaner neighborhood in both site and smell and improved water quality through a reduction in nutrient inputs to water bodies. It is also a message that is targeted specifically at pet owners.

Lawn and Garden Activities

Lawn and garden activities can result in contamination of storm water through pesticide, soil, and fertilizer runoff. Proper landscape management, however, can effectively reduce water use and contaminant runoff and enhance the aesthetics of a property. Environmentally friendly landscape management can protect the environment through careful planning and design, routine soil analysis, appropriate plant selection, use of practical turf areas, water use efficiency, use of mulches, and appropriate maintenance.

- Soil Analysis and Improvements. Residents should test soils every 3 to 4 years to determine the amount of nutrients necessary to maintain a healthy lawn. Soil analyses can also be performed by a local service company who can then provide suggestions for improving the ability to support specific types of vegetation and retain water at a specific site.
- Appropriate Plant Selection. Property owners should choose local or regional plants when developing an environmentally friendly landscape. Indigenous plant species are generally more water efficient and disease resistant.
- Practical Turf Areas. Property owners should plant non-turf areas where possible, because lawns require more water and maintenance than wildflowers, shrubs, and trees.
- Efficient Irrigation. Much of the water that is applied to lawns and gardens is not absorbed by the vegetation. When water is applied too quickly, it is lost as runoff along with the top layers of soil. To prevent this, it is important to use low-volume watering approaches such as drip-type or sprinkler systems.
- Use of Mulches. Mulches help retain water, reduce weed growth, prevent erosion, and improve the soil for plant growth.
- Fertilizers & Pesticides. Property owners should be discouraged from using fertilizers, or if they are used, from over-applying them. There are less-toxic alternatives to commercial fertilizers, such as composted organic material. Pesticide use can be avoided entirely by selecting hearty plants that are native to the area and by keeping them healthy.



A typical composting bin (Source: Alameda County Waste Management Authority, 2001)

Benefits - Property owners can develop a landscape plan that utilizes the natural conditions of the property. For example, the regional and climatic conditions of the site, existing vegetation, topography, intended uses of the property, and the grouping of plants by their water needs are all important considerations in designing a site that promotes natural vegetation growth while minimizing water loss and contamination.

Proper Disposal of Household Hazardous Wastes

Many products found in homes contain chemical ingredients that are potentially harmful to people and to the environment. Chemicals such as oven cleaners, paint removers, bug killers, solvents, and drain cleaners are just a few common hazardous products in the home.

Hazardous products include the following:

- Cleaning products: oven cleaner, floor wax, furniture polish, drain cleaner, and spot remover
- Car care and maintenance: motor oil, battery acid, gasoline, car wax, engine cleaner, antifreeze, degreaser, radiator flush, and rust preventative
- Home improvement products: paints, preservatives, strippers, brush cleaners, and solvents
- Other products labeled toxic, flammable, or corrosive, or containing lye, phenols, petroleum distillates or trichlorobenzene



Hazardous household wastes can be disposed of properly by taking them to a local waste collection facility

Benefits - Properly disposing of household hazardous wastes ensures that contamination through leaks and spills does not occur. If such wastes are disposed of with regular garbage, the toxic materials could destroy landfill liners or other disposal areas.

TOWN OF HOLLISTON HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE DAY
SATURDAY, JULY 29, 2006
9:00 A.M. TO 1:00 P.M.
MIDDLE SCHOOL
235 WOODLAND ST

Information courtesy of EPA. More information available at www.epa.gov