

**WHEN YOU'RE FERTILIZING  
THE LAWN,  
REMEMBER YOU'RE NOT JUST  
FERTILIZING THE LAWN.**



You fertilize the lawn. Then it rains. The rain-washes the fertilizer along the curb, into the storm drain, and directly into our lakes, streams and the Big Thompson River. This causes algae to grow, which uses up oxygen that fish need to survive. So if you fertilize, please follow directions and use sparingly.

A cooperative venture between the Puget Sound Action Team, Department of Ecology, King County and the cities of Bellevue, Seattle and Tacoma.

## How can you fertilize and help keep our waters clean?

- Use fertilizers sparingly. Many plants do not need as much fertilizer or need it as often as you might think.
- Do not fertilize before a rain-storm.
- Consider using organic fertilizers; they release nutrients more slowly.
- Use commercially available compost or make your own using garden waste. Mixing compost with your soil means your plants will need less chemical fertilizer and puts your waste to good use. Commercial compost and soil amendments may be available from your solid waste or wastewater utility as well as your local garden store.
- For more information on fertilizing alternatives and composting, call your County Extension's Master Gardeners program or the number in your community listed below.

# YOU CAN HELP PROTECT OUR WATERWAYS



Protecting and Improving  
Colorado's Stormwater Quality



## COLORADO WATER IS IMPORTANT TO ALL OF US SO LIVE LIKE YOU LOVE IT

Colorado water is very popular. That's because a lot of people depend on it. The snow that falls in the Colorado Rockies not only provides water to 5.46 million Coloradans, but also to people living in 18 other states. Colorado is the only state other than Hawaii where flows out of its borders, but doesn't flow in.

## ONLY RAIN TO THE DRAIN

The daily activities of all of us has the potential to affect water quality if we don't make good choices. Stormdrains are connected directly to our water bodies so anything that ends up on the driveway, alley, roof or sidewalk eventually will be carried by rain water and/or snow/ice melt to a water body such as Lake Loveland or the Big Thompson River.

## HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP:

### 1. PICK UP PET POOP

Pet waste can get flow storm drains and spread bacteria.

### 2. FIX THE OIL LEAK

Car leaks can spread oil into the water supply. One pint of oil can makea slick larger than a football field.

### 3. DIRECT YOUR DOWNSPOUTS

Ensure downspouts are pointed toward the lawn or plants, not the sidewalk.

### 4. SWEEP

Sweep up dirt and debris. Dirt on sidewalks and streets wash into the stormdrain and pollute our water.

### 5. COMPOST

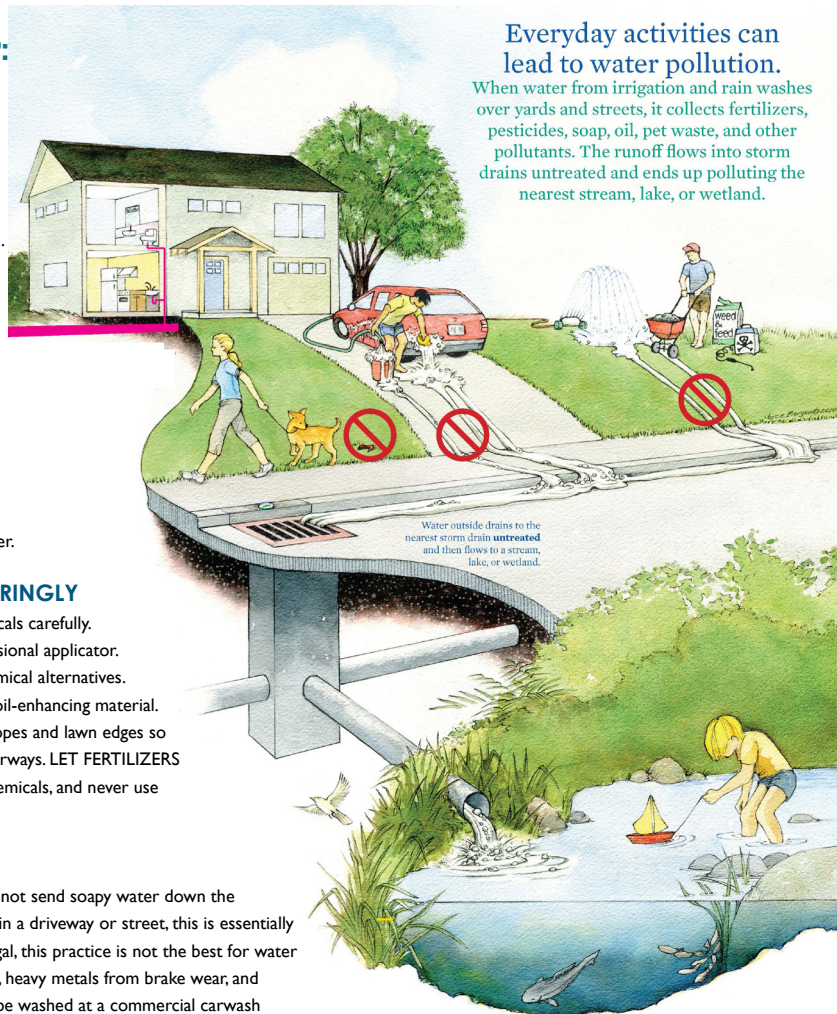
Compost and amend soil. Healthy soil acts as a water filter.

### 6. USE FERTILIZERS AND PESTICIDES SPARINGLY

**FOLLOW INSTRUCTIONS** - Read labels on lawn chemicals carefully. Always apply products sparingly. Consider hiring a professional applicator.  
**GO NATURAL** - Consider compost or natural lawn chemical alternatives. Composting creates natural, slow-release fertilizer and soil-enhancing material.  
**BE AWARE WHERE YOU FERTILIZE** - Use caution on slopes and lawn edges so fertilizer will not wash into near-by storm drains or waterways. **LET FERTILIZERS DRY PROPERLY** - Allow proper drying time for liquid chemicals, and never use lawn chemicals before a heavy rainfall is expected.

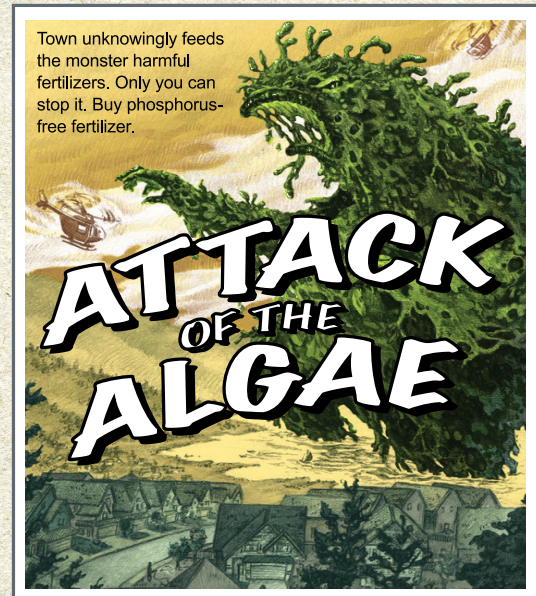
### 7. USE A COMMERCIAL CAR WASH

A commercial car wash is more water efficient and does not send soapy water down the driveway and into the stormdrain. When a car is washed in a driveway or street, this is essentially like washing the car in a local waterbody. Though not illegal, this practice is not the best for water quality as car wash water can contain fluids from engines, heavy metals from brake wear, and phosphorous from the soap and dirt. Ideally, cars should be washed at a commercial carwash where the water is some-times reused and is always discharged to a treatment system. If you or someone you know is planning a carwash fundraiser, ask the owner if you can use one of their wash bays. Encourage your friends, family and neighbors to wash their cars at commercial car washes.



### Everyday activities can lead to water pollution.

When water from irrigation and rain washes over yards and streets, it collects fertilizers, pesticides, soap, oil, pet waste, and other pollutants. The runoff flows into storm drains untreated and ends up polluting the nearest stream, lake, or wetland.



## WHAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH NUTRIENTS!

The nutrients from the fertilizer, pesticides, and soap can cause excess algae to grow. Just like in your garden, nutrients in waterbodies makes plants grow. Over application of fertilizers and pesticides can result in runoff that carries toxic levels of chemicals or excessive nutrients into our waterways. Too much algae harms water quality and makes boating, fishing and swimming unpleasant. As algae decay, they use up oxygen in the water that fish and other wildlife need. This pollution impacts aquatic life, wildlife and people who recreate and fish. The results are often unpleasant odors, taste, and poor aesthetics which can cause health problems in humans and livestock.

## DON'T FEED STORMDRAINS

Prevent materials/pollutants, i.e., oil, pesticides, fertilizer, paints, soaps, solvents, oil, trash, sand, grass clippings, leaves, paint, etc. from reaching the City's stormdrain. Stormwater runoff from rain and snow/ice melt picks up materials on the ground before entering the storm sewer and discharges them untreated directly into our waterbodies.