



# Community Partners for Clean Streams Monthly eMonitor



Volume 3, Number 4



**April 2006 Issue**

*A Publication of the Washtenaw County Drain Commissioner's Office  
Janis A. Bobrin, Drain Commissioner*

## In This Month's eMonitor

<b>Up Front:</b>	<b>Welcome to the Community Partners Monthly eMonitor</b>
<b>Topic of the Month:</b>	<b>Lawn Care and Gardening for Water Quality</b>
<b>Tip of the Month:</b>	<b>Green Gardening is Easy!</b>
<b>CPCS News:</b>	<b>Website Improvements</b>
<b>CPCS News:</b>	<b>Renewing Partners</b>

## Up Front

The eMonitor is designed to keep our Partners and friends updated on CPCS, stormwater management issues, provide helpful information to reduce stormwater and nonpoint source pollution, recognize new Partners, highlight upcoming events, and create networking opportunities. We hope you enjoy each edition of the Monthly eMonitor and welcome any comments, concerns, or suggestions.

## Yard Care and Water Quality

Now that spring is officially upon us and the days of working in the yard or garden are here, it is time to have a refresher on how lawn and garden care can affect water quality. As with many of our topics, the simple time and money saving ideas in this issue can help protect water quality at both your business and your home.



Non-point source pollution, also known as stormwater runoff, is the largest contributor to water pollution and decreased water quality. EPA studies show that 70% of all water pollution is derived from stormwater. This type of pollution is threatening our lakes, rivers and streams. Understanding that we can all contribute to protecting our waterways is the first step to clean water. By caring for our lawns and gardens in a manner that minimizes pollution, we become part of the solution.

## Lawn and Turf Care – Easy and Inexpensive

These days, people seem to be busier than ever. There is hardly time to relax, much less work in the yard. Caring for your lawn and garden with the environment in mind is actually very easy and it often saves time and money! Focusing on soil health and root growth makes for a healthy, beautiful and carefree lawn.

The tips outlined below are both easy and inexpensive. Consider these simple things everyone can do to have a great, professional looking lawn that protects water quality.



### **Soil Test**

- Have your soil tested by the MSU Extension service to determine what nutrients it really needs. Contact them at 734-997-1678 for more information.
- Often times, the soil needs little if any fertilizer to remain healthy.
- If you do need fertilizers, choose the proper combination of a low or no phosphorus, slow release fertilizer for your site.
- Do dandelions bug you? Determining the proper pH for your grass type and soil can deter dandelion growth.

### **Wise Watering**

- Water your lawn only when needed. The grass blades begin to curl when the turf is thirsty.
- Provide one inch of water to ensure deep roots. It is sometimes better to water ½ inch, then another ½ inch one hour later.
- Water only at night (10-11 pm) or early morning (8-9 am) to conserve water and decrease evaporation.
- Save money by avoiding scheduled watering with sprinkler systems, water only when needed!
- Check the weather report before watering. If rain is in the forecast, put out a rain gauge or tuna can to measure the amount. Less than an inch merits some additional watering.
- Be sure there is no rain event predicted when applying fertilizers. Water only lightly after application to prevent nutrient runoff.

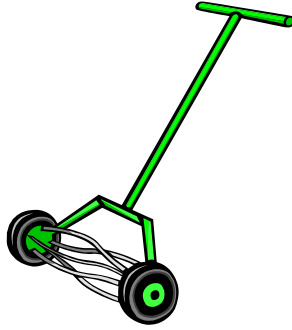


### **Mow High**

- First and last cut of the season should be low, about 1 ¼ inch, the rest of the season, mow to about 3”.
- Allow the grass to grow to 4.5 inches, and then cut back to 3 inches.
- Weeds have a hard time growing in the shade. Higher grass prevents weeds from establishing.
- Roots will grow deeper, creating a healthier lawn that is resistant to pests and weeds.
- Be sure your mower blades are sharp! This helps keep your lawn healthy and retain water.

### Leave Clippings on the Lawn

- Use a mulching mower, and let the clipping stay on the lawn.
- This allows the nutrients to seep back into the soil, requiring less fertilizer.



### Clean Cut

- Be sure your mower blades are sharp. Dull blades will shred the grass, causing it to get brown on the ends and be more susceptible to disease.
- Mow in the coolest part of the day and when the grass is dry. Wet grass will also “shred”, and hot grass is more sensitive to problems.

## Easy Gardening for the Environment

### **Consider Native Plants**

Native plants are those that have been adapted to a particular environment since “pre-settlement” of Europeans in the area. These types of plants are ideally suited to the local environment and are therefore more likely to thrive while requiring fewer resources in the form of water and nutrients. This also means less effort, time and money are necessary to maintain the plants.

There are many resources available for getting started with native plants. You can start by converting a small area of lawn to native plants. Even a small area can conserve resources. You can allow for adequate lawn space for recreation, while conserving resources in “converted” areas.

### **Chemical Free Pest Control**

Consider utilizing pest control techniques that do not involve pesticides. Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is the term used to describe methods of managing pests through a tiered system that begins with prevention and ends with minimal chemical use. Contact Community Partners for Clean Streams to request our comprehensive packet of information about IPM.

If you have a lawn and garden care service, be sure to inquire about their methods of pest control and fertilization



### Additional Resources

There are many excellent resources available to assist with lawn and garden maintenance ideas. Below, we have listed just a few of these web-based resources.

MSU Extension Service – <http://www.msue.msu.edu/portal/>

MSU Turfgrass Science - <http://www.turf.msu.edu/>

Master Gardener Program – <http://web1.msue.msu.edu/mastergardener/>

Native Landscaping – Washtenaw County Conservation District <http://washtenawcd.org/you/nativelandscape.php>

Native Plant Sources – <http://www.macd.org/rollovers/nativeplants/nplinks.html>

Lawn Care and Water Quality - MN Dept. of Agriculture <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/APPD/ace/lawncwaterq.htm>

## [CPCS News](#)

### **Renewing Partners**

The following partners have both renewed for a third term with Community Partners for Clean Streams!

- Arbor Springs Water Company and
- Fox Hills Golf Course and Banquet Center



### **Website Improvements**

Our Community Partners webpages have recently undergone updates, improvements and additions! Check out all the resources available online at [www.ewashtenaw.org](http://www.ewashtenaw.org). One new feature is the archive of eMonitors. You can search for past issues by issue number or topic, and download in pdf form. Also available are fact sheets, handbooks and brochures.

### **Upcoming Community Partner Events**

#### **Johnson Creek Day**

Johnson Creek Day will be held on Saturday, May 20<sup>th</sup>, 2006 at the Northville Fish Hatchery Park, 11:00 am – 2:00 pm. Includes fun for the whole family such as a native plant demonstration, trout fishing, food and activities.

## [Subscribe/Unsubscribe](#)

If you would prefer not to receive the monthly eMonitor, simply respond to this email with the word “unsubscribe” in the subject line or body of the text.

## [Contact Us](#)

### **Community Partners for Clean Streams**

705 N. Zeeb Road, PO Box 8645  
Ann Arbor, MI 48107-8645

Michelle J. Bononi, Senior Environmental Planner (734) 222 – 6833 [bononim@ewashtenaw.org](mailto:bononim@ewashtenaw.org)

Or

Vicki Kalkirtz, Environmental Planning Intern (734) 222 – 6813

[kalkirtz@ewashtenaw.org](mailto:kalkirtz@ewashtenaw.org)

[http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/drain\\_commissioner/dc\\_cpcs.html](http://www.ewashtenaw.org/government/drain_commissioner/dc_cpcs.html)

