



HELP KEEP OUR  
LOCAL WATERS  
CLEAN AND  
HEALTHY

## YARD WASTE

*Plymouth Stormwater  
Management Team*

### How does yard care affect you and your environment?

Your property is part of a watershed, an area of land from which all the surface water and groundwater flows from higher elevations to a water body.

Yard debris, including leaves and plant material like shrub trimmings and grass clippings, can be a harmful source of stormwater pollution. This debris can clog culverts, storm drains, and pipes, causing flooding. Debris can carry fertilizers and pesticides from your yard and deposit them in streams and ponds. Putting leaves and grass clippings into waterways can increase nutrients that lead to stream oxygen depletion.

The fertilizers and pesticides you use in your yard are potential pollutants. If you improperly or excessively apply chemicals, these can wash off your property and damage brooks, lakes and ponds. Excess nitrogen and phosphorus, two key ingredients in fertilizer, may result in fish kills and closure of swimming beaches.

### Tips for yard care

It is easy to help protect our streams and the drainage systems leading to our waterways.

- ☐ Do not pile leaves or other yard waste beside streams or drainage swales where it can blow or wash into the water. Use designated leaf collection bags for curbside leaf recycling.

- ☐ Do not blow or rake leaves or grass clippings from your property into streets, streams, ponds, or drainage swales.
- ☐ Recycle grass clippings and their nutrients on your lawn. You can also use a mulching lawnmower to recycle leaf litter into your lawn in the fall!
- ☐ Compost leaves and grass clippings along with yard waste. Select a compost location that is not near streams, ponds, and wetlands.
- ☐ Use organic or slow-release fertilizers that are less likely to wash off your yard during heavy rains.

### Contact information

For more information on stormwater topics, visit the Town webpage

<https://www.plymouth-ma.gov/engineering/pages/stormwater>

Additional guidance is available at the U. S. Environmental Protection Agency website  
[www.epa.gov/nps](http://www.epa.gov/nps)

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection stormwater website also provides helpful information about reducing impacts of runoff on brooks, lakes and marine waters.

Lake and watershed groups in Town also offer stormwater guides on their websites.