

# What is Stormwater & How it Affects You

Stormwater is simply water that falls onto the ground from rain or snow events. The water that does not soak into the ground is called stormwater runoff. As stormwater runs off lawns, roofs, driveways, parking lots, and roads, it can flow into our wetlands, streams, lakes, and the rivers and carry pollutants it picks up along the way. The pollutants include oil, grease, gasoline, lead and cadmium from the roads; pesticides, herbicides and animal waste from residential areas & farmlands; and dirt from construction sites, to name a few. Added to this list are items improperly disposed of into storm drains or on the ground.

All these contaminants end up in waterways, wetlands, ponds, lakes, and can impact shellfish beds, fish and animal habitat, recreational swimming, and even our drinking water.

Illegal dumping and putting anything down a storm drain is another cause of water pollution. To lessen pollution, we all need to do our part and change our habits. Your efforts along with your neighbors can make a difference.

# Biosolids & Lime Pick-Up and Yard Waste

## Recycling

### Fort Wayne City Utilities

260-749-8040 | 6200 block of Lake Ave

#### April-November

Monday-Saturday 8am-6pm

Sunday Noon-6pm

#### December-March

Monday-Friday 7am-3pm

*Closed holidays*



Find out more about stormwater management at:  
<https://utilities.cityoffortwayne.org/>

To report a stormwater drainage issue or to report illegal dumping call 311 or (260) 427-8311 or email [311@cityoffortwayne.org](mailto:311@cityoffortwayne.org)

# Green Landscaping

## Lawn Care Practices to Protect Water Quality

## A Reference Guide for Fort Wayne Residents



# How Green Landscaping Prevents Stormwater Pollution

## Test Your Soil

Excess fertilizer can lead to algal blooms. Don't waste time and money using fertilizer your lawn may not need—test your soil for nutrients and pH to determine if your lawn and garden require added nutrients to be healthy.

You can purchase a home test for soil pH, nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium at local hardware stores, “big box” home and garden stores or online .

More information on soil testing is available from the Purdue Extension Office at <https://extension.purdue.edu/allen>

## Choose Native Plants & Water Them Deeply

Native plants are well-suited to our area, requiring less water, fertilizer, and pesticides than other species. Their lower maintenance and high conservation value make them a good choice for your yard. **Ask your local garden center for some native plant choices.**

Water deeply to promote strong root growth, and water in the early morning to avoid evaporation. Using less water saves you money.

It also means less chemical run-off and soil erosion, giving us cleaner rivers.



STORMWATER

## Composting and Grasscycling

Composting is a controlled way to break down organic matter and create a rich, natural fertilizer. It can enhance soil texture, and the ability to absorb air and water. Compost also suppresses weed growth and reduces erosion.

Fort Wayne City Utilities produces and distributes biosolids—a nutrient-rich by-product of the wastewater treatment process that is then mixed with composted leaves.

Applied to land before planting, they provide nutrients essential to plant growth and can reduce the amount of chemical fertilizer needed.

Grasscycling is another alternative as it refers to the practice of leaving grass clippings on the lawn when mowing.

**The average lawn requires about \$700 and 70 hours of labor per year to maintain.** However, you can cut your cost and reduce the time and energy you spend by grasscycling.

A 1000 square-foot lawn can produce up to 500 pounds of clippings in a year. The weight of the yard waste can increase the monthly bill for trash collection services.

For optimal grasscycling results:

- Mow when the grass is dry to touch
- Keep the mower blades sharp
- Cut off no more than 1/3 the length of grass
- Cut when grass is 3 to 4 inches tall

## Compost Recipe

1 part “green” = fresh grass clippings, manure, garden plants, and fruit/vegetable scraps (no meat, dairy, or fats/oils)  
3 parts “brown” = dried leaves and plants, branches, and woody materials

Mix together and moisten, turn occasionally until dark and crumbly (several weeks to a year)

Use the compost around trees, shrubs, perennials, and house plants to deter weeds, improve soil structure, and retain moisture.

## Plant a Rain Garden

Rain gardens are landscaped areas ideal for holding and processing stormwater. Using plants, they also draw much of the nutrient rich water deep into the soil. They're a great strategy for soaking in rainwater from downspouts or sump pumps.

Reducing Impervious surfaces can also help.

Driveways, concrete patios, and other hard surfaces block rainwater from filtering through the soil and replenishing groundwater.

Instead of adding more hard surfaces on your property, try wooden decks, landscaped areas, pervious driveways, and mulched paths to provide more areas that let rain water runoff soak into the ground.

Collect rainwater in rain barrels for later use in your garden.