

For A Healthy, Beautiful Yard with minimum effects on water quality, try these ideas:

Proper mowing at 3 to 4 inches high (or the highest setting on your mower) results in 80% fewer weeds and thicker turf that doesn't require chemical application. Mowing height is one of the biggest factors in creating a healthy lawn.

When grass is cut tall, it conserves moisture and minimizes weed seed germination.



Consider having a "good enough" lawn . . . When making lawn care decisions. It doesn't have to look perfect to be healthy and meet the needs of your family.

Don't bag your grass clippings. Leave them on the lawn because they can contribute much of the nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium your lawn needs. They are a natural fertilizer.

Clover is your yard's friend. Instead of treating to prevent it, think of clover as free fertilizer. Clover takes nitrogen from the air and feeds your soil. It can provide up to 30% of a lawn's yearly nitrogen requirement.



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Why Have A Show-Me Yard?

Show-Me Yards and Neighborhoods is an educational effort to inform landowners and businesses about ways they can be more environmentally responsible with their lawn and landscape practices. A Show-Me Yard can help protect Missouri's lakes and rivers for future generations.

What Does My Yard Have To Do With Healthy Streams?

If lawns were classified as a crop, it would rank as the fifth-largest in the country, based on area.

Homeowners use ten times more chemicals per acre than farmers.

67,000,000 pounds of synthetic pesticides are used on U.S. lawns.

30-60% of urban fresh water is used for watering lawns.*

*Source: Borman et al. *Redesigning the American Lawn*, Yale University Press, 2001.



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Healthy Yards and Neighborhoods

Make Your Yard A "Show-Me" Yard



Stormwater runoff from yards and driveways is one of the most significant sources of contamination in our County's waters.

Homeowners overuse chemicals on their lawn and these chemicals are finding their way to our streams.

Stormwater flows directly from gutters and storm drains to streams and is not treated in any way. This means our lawn and garden chemicals, and other pollutants have the potential to kill fish and harm other living things.



What does a Show-Me Yard Look Like?

You can create a Show-Me Yard simply by changing the way you take care of your yard.



With a Show-Me Yard You Win . . .
and so does the environment. You
don't waste water, fertilizers or
pesticides and Jefferson County's
streams, lakes and
wildlife are protected.



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How does your
yard measure
up?



Consider these easy changes
to how you care for your yard:



1. Wash your car on a grassy area so soapy water does not enter the storm drain. If your car has fluid leaks, get them fixed so fluids are not picked up in runoff.
2. Compost leaves and other yard waste at home. Compost adds nutrients to your native plants and garden.
3. Include a garden of native plants in your yard. They tolerate drought and require no fertilizers or extra watering. They also provide a food source for wildlife.
4. Mow high . . . Typically 3 to 4 inches or the highest setting on your mower. Leave clippings on the lawn. They provide nutrients. Sharpen the blade at least once during the summer.
5. Install a rain barrel to catch storm water runoff. Water can later be used to water garden plants.
6. Install a rain garden as a retention for storm water runoff. Rain gardens hold storm water long enough for it to seep into the ground as ground water. Use native plants, grasses, in your rain garden.
7. Clean up pet waste. Storm water runoff picks up bacteria (e-coli) and carries it directly to the nearest stream or storm water inlet. Cat litter should be disposed of in your trash cans.
8. Increase the amount of tree cover in your yard as an additional source of water retention.
9. Clover in your yard is OK. It provides nitrogen—a fertilizer—for your lawn.
10. Have a soil test done, then apply fertilizer per recommendations.
11. Don't sweep or dump anything into the street because it will enter the storm drain that leads directly to the nearest stream.
12. Seed bare spots in early spring or early fall.

