



# Greenwood Village

NEWSLETTER

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METRO PUBLIC  
SAFETY

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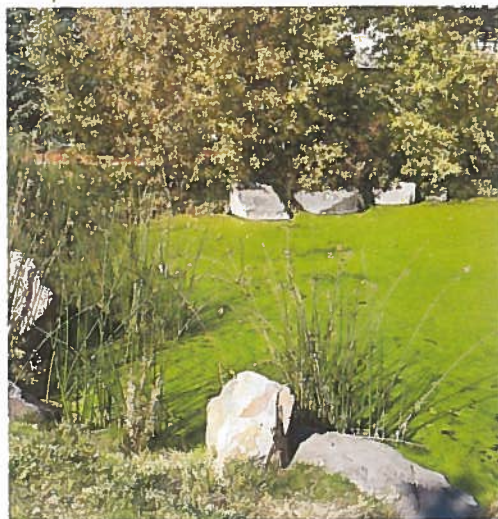


# OUR NATURAL *environment*

## AN INTRODUCTION TO STORMWATER POLLUTION

Although it is true that “April showers bring May flowers,” landscape maintenance activity in the spring season can increase the potential of stormwater runoff and pollution. Stormwater runoff occurs when snow melts and rain falls onto impervious surfaces such as rooftops, parking lots, sidewalks and streets, creating a body of water that picks up debris and other pollutants before flowing into a storm drain and leading to the nearest creek, pond or lake untreated.

Since 1998, the Village has helped spearhead efforts to improve stormwater quality in Village waterways including streams, ponds, and in Cherry Creek Reservoir. One of the most abundant pollutants that affects the Village’s waterways is excess nutrients, including phosphorous and nitrogen. This is especially true of the reservoir and ponds in the Village, which suffer from periodic algae blooms during the summer months. These blooms impair the ability of the water body to support aquatic habitat



and diminish the recreational enjoyment of the visiting public. While nutrients including phosphorous and nitrogen are necessary for plant life to survive and grow, nutrient pollution is a widespread and challenging environmental concern.

## LANDSCAPE WASTE

As we look to landscape maintenance to provide an aesthetically pleasing environment, activities such as chemical application (fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides), mowing, gardening, lawn care and grounds maintenance can negatively impact water quality and cause pollution.

**Did you know** that landscape waste including grass clippings, leaves, and other debris, can block the natural flow of water in the storm drainage system and decompose? Municipal street sweepers are not equipped to pick up large piles of leaves or debris and can spread these materials around the street. Although landscape debris is “natural,” these materials provide excess nutrients, which over fertilize water and encourage harmful aquatic plants and algae to thrive. When these plants and algae decompose, it removes oxygen in water, harming fish and other aquatic organisms. Debris and trash can also choke, suffocate or disable aquatic life. Excess nutrients and trash leave a lasting negative impact on water quality, local ecology, and recreational use of our waterways.

## BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR LANDSCAPE MAINTENANCE

As a homeowner, Homeowners’



Association or Commercial Business, you can follow best management practices for landscape maintenance. Your yard can have a positive effect on water quality by slowing down and filtering runoff water or it can contribute to water quality problems. It all depends on how you manage water, chemicals, and landscape maintenance activity.

- Maintain a healthy lawn and mow your lawn so no more than one-third of the length of grass is removed. Use a mulching mower and leave grass blades on the lawn or compost. After mowing and trimming, ensure grass clippings are swept back into the grass and not blown into the street and curb and gutters. Grass clippings contain fertilizers, which can contribute to excessive nutrients in waterways.
- Did you know that most established Colorado lawns will have adequate phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) in the soil without the need for additional P and K fertilizer? If you apply a typical blended fertilizer based on N needs, you will usually apply more P and K than most lawns require.
- Use phosphorous free fertilizer and

perform a soil test to optimize application. Follow label directions and do not over fertilize, **more is not better**. When watering landscape areas after fertilizer application, take care to not overwater allowing water to runoff into streets or other conduits to the waterways. Do not fertilize if the forecast calls for a storm in the next day or two.

- If a soil test is not feasible, refer to the following fact sheets for guidance on fertilizer application and integrated pest management (IPM) and plant health care from the Colorado State University Extension Master Gardener Program:
  - Homeowner's Guide to Fertilizing Your Lawn and Garden at

<https://extension.colostate.edu/docs/pubs/garden/xcm222.pdf>.

- Colorado Master Gardener Garden Notes #101 IPM and Plant Health Care <http://www.ext.colostate.edu/mg/Gardennotes/101.pdf>.
- For additional lawn care and IPM guidance, contact the Colorado Master Gardener Program in Arapahoe County at 303-730-1920, or [MasterGardener@Arapahoe.gov](mailto:MasterGardener@Arapahoe.gov).
- When using chemicals, follow label directions when handling, applying, and disposing of chemicals. Properly calibrate application equipment to ensure proper amount of chemicals are applied. **More is not better**. Mechanically or hand pull weeds when possible

in lieu of chemical weed killer.

- Direct downspouts to a depressed area or a garden bed so stormwater runoff soaks into your yard instead of rushing out to the street. Consider installing a rain garden and swales and berms to your landscape so runoff is contained and does not leave your yard.
- Have spill materials available and ready in case of a spill of fertilizer, herbicide, or pesticide. Clean up spills promptly, with dry methods if possible. Do not power wash materials into the curb and gutter or street.
- Pick up and dispose of litter. Empty trash cans frequently so they do not overflow. Report illegal dumping and littering Greenwood Village at 303-708-6100 or [www.greenwoodvillage.com](http://www.greenwoodvillage.com). *GV*

## WE NEED YOUR HELP TO PROTECT WATER QUALITY IN OUR WATERWAYS

Historically, in the Front Range, waterways including streams, ponds, and lakes have seen water quality impacts with excessive algae growth. Although some algae can be beneficial, excessive algae growth can be unsightly, decrease dissolved oxygen levels, and emit odor. This can negatively impact aquatic life, and interfere with swimming, fishing, and other recreational activities.

Such upsets can be contributed to weather, stormwater runoff laden with nutrients including nitrogen, phosphorous, pet waste, algae accumulation, and in some cases, non-natural contributions from illicit activity. Although there are means to treat these symptoms, it is better to treat it at the source. Preventing these natural upsets from occurring in the first place is preferable and less costly than controlling once they become a problem.

The key to long-term control is limiting and reducing the input of pollutants to waterways. Pollutants include nutrients, pet waste, leaves and grass clippings, fertilizers (which contain phosphorous and nitrogen), pesticides, soaps, and detergents.

- Pick up after our pets.
- Properly apply fertilizer and pesticides.
- Ensure that grass clippings remain on the grass and are not swept into the gutters and waterways.
- Ensure carpet cleaning services properly dispose of waste water.
- Participate in Household Hazardous Waste Pickup by calling 800-449-7587 for information and to schedule a pickup time.

For disposal of paint care products, participate in the Colorado Paint Stewardship program at [www.paintcare.org](http://www.paintcare.org) or call 855-724-6809 to find your nearest drop off site.

For more information on water quality, please call Greenwood Village Public Works at 303-708-6100 or [www.greenwoodvillage.com](http://www.greenwoodvillage.com).

