

Landscaping

Major causes of pollution in streams can be attributed to landscaping and garden maintenance activities. Soils, yard wastes, over-watering and garden chemicals become part of the urban runoff mix that winds its way through streets, gutters, and storm drains before entering local waterways.

Poorly functioning sprinklers and over-watering can increase the number of pollutants flowing into the city's storm drains. Fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides are washed off of lawns and landscaped areas, and these chemicals not only kill garden pests, they also harm useful insects, poison fish, and contaminate local waterways.

Leaves, grass clippings, and tree trimmings that are swept or blown into the street and storm drains are pollutants. These materials clog storm drains, increasing the risk of flooding on your street. As they decompose, they also absorb oxygen that fish need to survive. Blowing or sweeping lawn waste into the street or storm sewer is a violation of Tulsa's Pollution Ordinance.

Best Management Practices that include the proper handling, storage, and disposal of materials can prevent pollutants from entering local waterways through the storm drain system.

General Landscaping

- Protect stockpiles of dirt and other materials from wind and rain by storing them under traps or secured plastic sheeting.
- Schedule grading and excavation projects for dry weather.
- Prevent erosion by planting fast-growing annual and perennial plants and grasses to help shield and bind the soil.

Garden and Lawn Maintenance

- Do not over-water. Conserve water by using irrigation practices such as drip irrigation, soaker hoses, or micro-spray systems.
- Do not blow or rake leaves into the street, gutter, or storm drains and use mulching mowers.
- Use organic or non-toxic fertilizers.
- Do not apply lawn chemicals (including pesticides, herbicides or fertilizers) near ditches, streams, or other bodies of water.

- Follow directions on the container and do not over apply lawn chemicals. Over application can result in contaminated runoff which may damage nearby waterbodies.
- If unused landscaping chemicals are leftover disposing of them correctly is imperative. It is against the law to dispose of chemicals down the storm sewer system. To dispose of unused chemicals correctly (from non-business generated waste only) please call 918-596-2100 to schedule a free appointment to drop off chemicals at Tulsa's Household Pollutant Collection Facility. For a list of businesses that take unwanted commercial chemicals, visit: www.cityoftulsa.org/resourcerecovery
- If a spill of lawn chemicals does occur. Work to contain the spill preventing it from reaching the storm drain. This can be done by using kitty litter or other absorbent materials to soak up the spill. When the spill has been absorbed or contained dispose of the soaked materials in the proper receptacle.
- Store pesticides, fertilizers, and other chemicals in a covered area to prevent runoff.
- Use City of Tulsa curbside services for lawn waste or take it to the City of Tulsa's Greenwaste Site – open seven days a week, 2100 N. 145th E. Ave. 7:30am to 5:00pm.

Tulsa's soils generally do not need Phosphorus or Potassium. Any excess fertilizer applied will wash into local waterways. Contact the Tulsa Master Gardeners at (918) 746-3701 or in person at 4116 E. 15th St. to have a soil test conducted or to receive advice on pesticide and fertilizer application.

BMPs are an important tool in helping the City of Tulsa remain a vibrant and healthy place to live and work. They also help the city maintain compliance with its Stormwater Quality Permit.