

Storm drains are not sewers.

Just think of them as direct pipelines to the Hudson River, the Long Island Sound, and reservoirs or other waterways! That's why you should never dump pollutants down a storm drain.

Here are some simple things you can do to keep our waterways clean:

- Scoop up pet waste and flush it down the toilet or place it in a plastic bag and dispose of it in the trash.
- Never dump motor oil or automobile fluids on the ground or near storm drains. Gas stations and auto supply stores will take used motor oil.
- Wash cars at commercial car washes that recycle water or wash on a grassy area to keep soapy water from running into the street and down the drain.
- Use pesticide alternatives whenever possible. If you must use pesticides or fertilizers, use the proper amount and water slowly to limit runoff.

Limit the Use of Pesticides and Fertilizers

Fertilizers are great for your grass, but when used improperly they can end up in the water we drink, swim and fish in. Nutrients in fertilizers cause algae to grow, sapping the water of oxygen. Pesticides on your lawn can also harm our water and are often unnecessary.

Try these non-polluting tips for a healthy lawn and garden:

- Test the soil before applying fertilizers (ph test kits are available at garden centers or through your local cooperative extension). Also check out their Lawn Care Water Quality Almanac.
- Instead of using commercial fertilizers, spread corn gluten on your lawn to prevent weeds from reseeding.
 - If you must use commercial Use compost in your garden.
 - For strong roots, keep grass 3" high.
 - Leave grass clippings on your lawn.
 - Rid your garden of pests with lady bugs and spiders and repellent plants such as marigolds and tansy. Hand pick pests or use insecticidal soap or natural mixtures to fight black spot and aphids.
 - Keep the soil healthy by removing debris and mulching trees and shrubs. fertilizers, one application in early September is enough.

Don't dump chemicals down the drain.

You wouldn't put oil, solvents or other household chemicals in the Hudson River, Long Island Sound, our reservoirs or other waterways. But that's just what you're doing if you dispose of them in the gutter or down the drain.

Try these tips for safe disposal of oil, solvents and household chemicals:

- Allow paint to harden, then dispose of in the trash
- Use a ground cloth when changing your oil or doing engine work.
- Collect used oil in plastic jugs and recycle at gas stations or auto supply stores.
- Dispose of toxic substances at Westchester County Household Chemical Cleanup Days. Call Westchester County at 813-5425.