

For a healthy, beautiful yard with minimum effects on water quality, consider these ideas:

Proper mowing at 3-4 inches high (or the highest setting on your mower) results in 80% fewer weeds and thicker turf that doesn't require chemical inputs. 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.

Use traps for mole control. The only proper use for an insecticide is to control a pest, such as sod damaging grubs, not to drive moles away. Moles eat many different insects including earthworms, and earthworms create healthy soils. Did you know some pesticides are very effective on the pest, but less harmful to the other insects in that environment?

Don't bag your grass clippings. They can contribute much of the nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium your lawn needs.

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

Would you like to feature your yard?

We are looking for yards that feature the elements of this program. Would you like to volunteer your yard as an educational site for a week or two? The Healthy Yards for Clear Streams program is an educational effort to inform landowners & businesses about ways they can be more environmentally responsible with their lawn and landscape practices. Contact Cole County Extension Center for more information.



Partners of the Healthy Yards for Clear Streams' include:

City of Jefferson, County of Cole, Cole County Extension Center including the Central Missouri Master Gardeners, Missouri Department of Natural Resources, Lincoln University, the University of Missouri Extension, Soil and Water Conservation District, Longfellows Garden Center, Missouri Wildflowers Nursery, and Critical Site's Prairie and Wetland Center.

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Additional Resources:

University Resources: <http://extension.missouri.edu/cole/>
Natural Yard Care www.metrokc.gov/dnrp/swd/naturalyardcare/lawncares.asp
Grow Native! www.grownative.org
10,000 Rain Gardens Initiative www.rainkc.com/



An educational effort to help landowners and businesses be environmentally responsible with lawn and landscape practices.

You can help protect Missouri's lakes and rivers for future generations.



Easy changes for a healthy yard:

1. LAWNS

- Mow high....3 to 4 inches or at highest setting. (1a)
- Keep mower blade sharp.
- Leave clippings on lawn. They provide soil nutrients.
- Clover is okay; it adds nitrogen to your lawn. (1d)
- Overseed bare spots in early spring or early fall.
- Compost leaves, yard trimmings and weeds. If you collect any lawn clippings, compost them too.
- Reduce lawn area and mowing, eliminate erosion and stabilize slopes with no-mow plantings.
- Clean up pet waste (1h)

2. GARDENS

- Use hardy native plants for easy-care perennial beds and rain gardens.
- Mulch circles beneath trees and around beds. (2b)
- Identify weeds, diseases or insects before taking action.

3. WATERING and FERTILIZING

- Use a rain gauge or small tin can to track rainfall and avoid unnecessary over-watering. (3a)
- Install a rain barrel and use collected rain for watering plants and washing your car. (3b)
- Check streets and sidewalks after applying lawn products; sweep excess into lawn, not the street. Remember: storm drains lead straight to streams.
- Measure your yard to determine its size and have a soil test done to determine correct product rates and application. Reduce use when possible and follow directions.

4. LEARN and SHARE INFORMATION

Attend Healthy Yards for Clear Streams workshops.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) considers stormwater runoff from yards, streets, parking lots and other urban areas to be one of the most significant sources of contamination in our nation's waters.

Homeowners use more chemicals per acre on lawns than farmers use on crops. Some of these chemicals are finding their way to our streams and lakes.

All stormwater flows directly from gutters and storm drains straight to streams and is not treated in any way. This means our lawn and garden chemicals have the potential to cause fish kills and harm other living things.

For more information contact Cole County Extension Center

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 Extension



Following a 'Healthy Yards for Clear Streams' program benefits Missouri's environment.