Dyess Air Force Base

Lawn Care & Garden Tips

Keep Our Creeks Clean by Properly Maintaining Your Lawn.

Lawn care, landscaping and pest control practices are major contributors to stormwater pollution. Rain or melting snow/ice flows across yards, rooftops, paved areas, picking up leaves, grass clippings, garden and lawn chemicals. This flows directly into the storm drain system.

Why Does It Matter?

Nutrients and other chemicals from yard waste can cause excessive algae growth and toxin production. Algae blooms can rob the organisms that live in our streams from the oxygen they need to survive, killing fish along the way, not to mention it makes water from the tap taste funky and that just ruins the taste of our sweet Texas tea.

How You Can Make a Difference!

Lawn Care

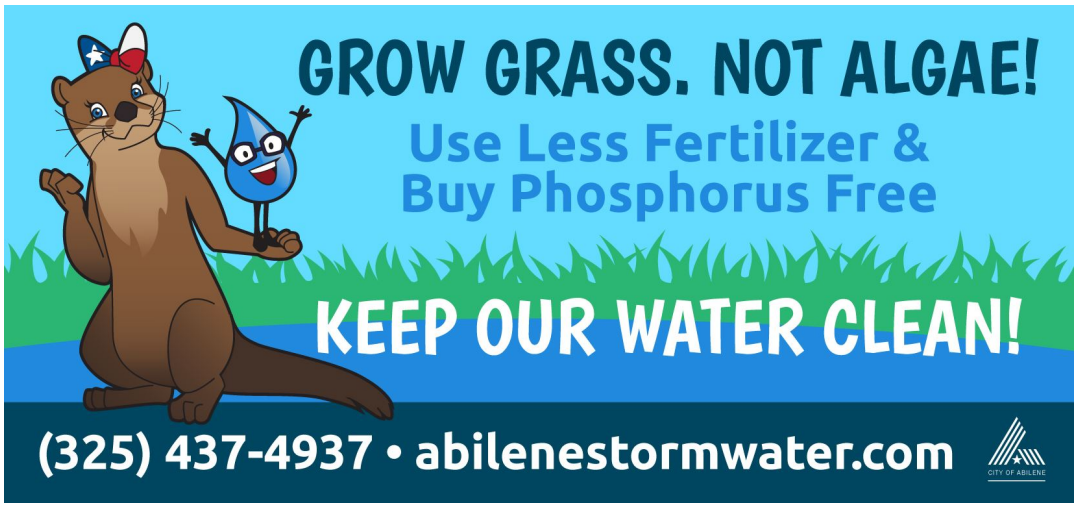
- Don't scalp your lawn when mowing. Leave your grass fairly long and within the City's Code Compliance for grass height.
- Leave the grass blades on the lawn via mulching or bag and use as a compost. Do not blow clippings into the gutter or street.
- Compost or throw away leaves and other organic matter instead of putting it in the street. Excessive leaves and organic material can contribute to high nutrient levels in the water.
- Enjoy the outdoors and hand pick your weeds. If you must spray, spot treat for weeds.

Watering

- Direct downspouts from your home gutter system to depressed areas or garden/flower beds so that water soaks into your yard and doesn't run into the street.
- You can water your lawn too much. Too much of anything is bad including watering your lawn. Excessive runoff wastes water and washes any fertilizer or nutrients you've added down the street into the storm drain.

Fertilizing

- If the forecast calls for rain in the next two days, don't fertilize. The rain will only wash the fertilizer off your lawn, down the gutter and into the storm drain.
- Fertilize only when necessary and be sure to follow the instructions. It goes against the Texas way of living which is, "If a little is good then more must be better." It actually weakens your lawn and the excess runs off into the storm drain.
- Have your soil tested so you know exactly what nutrients are needed for your lawn. Texas A&M Soil Testing Lab
- Use compost whenever possible it has many more benefits for your landscaping and improves the soil's health.



Lawn Design Options

- Consider a rain garden or Xeriscaping and direct runoff from your roof to drain on the garden. Harvesting rainwater is best.
- Consider using porous materials (bricks, gravel, flagstone) for your sidewalks and driveways instead of impervious materials (concrete, asphalt).
- Add trees and shrubs to capture and hold rainwater before it can reach the ground.

Xeriscape Landscaping

- Consider xeriscaping as a landscape method as it uses low-water-use plants to limit your water use.
- Use porous material for walkways and patios to prevent wasteful runoff and keep water in your yard.
- Group plants with the same watering needs together to avoid overwatering some while under-watering others.
- Choose the right West Texas-friendly plants and watch them thrive in our desert environment.
- Reduce the amount of lawn in your yard by planting shrubs and ground covers appropriate to your site and region.
- Plant in the spring and fall, when the watering requirements are lower.
- Avoid planting grass in areas that are hard to water, such as steep inclines and isolated strips along sidewalks and driveways.
- Leave lower branches on trees and shrubs and allow leaf litter to accumulate on the soil. This keeps the soil cooler and reduces evaporation.
- Start a compost pile. Using compost in your garden or flower beds adds water-holding organic matter to the soil.
- Use a layer of organic mulch on the surface of your planting beds to minimize weed growth that competes for water.
- Spreading a 2-4 inch layer of organic mulch around plants helps them retain moisture, saving water, time and money.
- Next time you add or replace a flower or shrub, choose a low-water-use plant and save up to 550 gallons each year.
- Collect water from your roof by installing gutters and downspouts. Direct the runoff to plants and trees.
- For automatic water savings, direct water from HVAC systems to water-loving plants in your landscape.