

How to Manage Your Lawn, Garden, Pets & Work Site for a Clean Creek



Be a Good Creek Neighbor!



Make our Creek Fishable & Swimable

The Spa Creek Conservancy is a volunteer organization dedicated to educating itself and its diverse resident and business neighbors to create, explore and carry out the rehabilitation and restoration of the Spa Creek watershed to meet its urban conservation and stewardship challenges

For More Information
Visit SINCH:
www.spacreek.org

Want to Get Involved to
Protect and Restore Spa Creek?

JOIN the Spa Creek Conservancy

How Can I Control Soil Erosion?

Loose topsoil erodes easily during rainfall. Eroded soil flows into streams carrying with it fertilizer, pesticides, plus oils, and other pollutants from driveways and patios. Reducing soil erosion will help retain soil fertility and keep waterways clean.

Water falling from rooftops or gutters forms fast moving channels that scour soil. Divert rainwater from roofs, driveways, and patios onto the grass or gardens to allow for gradual infiltration.

Use concrete splash blocks or rain barrels under gutters to reduce the impact of water. Rain barrels slowly release the water into the ground preventing rapid runoff and erosion.

Do not hose down patios, parking lots, driveways and sidewalks. Sweeping them and disposing of debris in trash prevents soil, fertilizer, and other trash from reaching our creek.

Reduce bare soil with mulch and plantings to establish permanent cover.

Stabilize steep slopes with ground cover or consider constructing a terrace system to intercept and reduce water and soil.

Remember...

- Dispose of pet waste in trash or toilet.
- Control garden pests with bird and bat houses.
- Keep plants free of good hiding spots for insects.
- If all else fails, use less toxic alternatives to pesticides.
- Have your soil tested and choose water-insoluble nitrogen before you use fertilizer.
- Convert some lawn into a native plant garden, needing little or no fertilizer.

References and Resources

USEPA, Office of Water, Chesapeake Bay Program, www.epa.gov
Center for Watershed Protection, Inc., www.cwp.org

I would like to join the Spa Creek Conservancy, Inc. and contribute:
 Regular/Family \$20 Associations/Businesses \$50
 Patrons \$100 Benefactors \$500

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Home Phone _____ Daytime Phone _____

E-Mail Address: _____

Where you would like to be involved: _____

Please make out your check to: Spa Creek Conservancy, Inc.

Mail to: SCC Treasurer, P.O. Box 2199, Annapolis, MD 21404-2199

Managing Your Lawn, Garden, Pets & Work Site for a Clean Creek

Homeowners play an important role in preserving the water quality of local streams and creeks. Every year, thousands of tons of sediment, fertilizer, and pesticides from residential lawns and gardens seep into local waterways. These pollutants cause cloudy, turbid water, destroy aquatic habitat, and promote harmful algal blooms. Luckily there are many simple ways home owners and business owners can reduce the amount of pollution from yards, worksites and gardens without sacrificing pleasant landscapes or gardens.

Why Shouldn't I Use Pesticides?

Pesticides cause damage to aquatic life in our creek and pose health risks to household pets and children. You can enjoy lush, healthy lawns, shrubbery and gardens without using pesticides.

How can I Control Pests Without Pesticides?

Attract birds and bats by placing bird and bat houses in your yard. These animals eat hundreds of insects per day.

Keep gardens free of debris such as dead plants or brush piles which provide hiding for insect pests.

Plow or till gardens in the fall. Insect larvae exposed after tilling are less likely to survive the winter.

Prune plants to improve air circulation and quicken leaf-drying.

Prune out infested plants immediately to prevent the spread of pests or disease.

Attract beneficial insects such as dragonflies, ladybugs, praying mantids, and spiders that prey on many garden pests. Plants herbs, marigolds, zinnias, sunflowers, and wildflowers.

If preventative methods fail to prevent an outbreak of garden pests, try less toxic alternatives before turning to pesticides. Pyrethrum, Rotenone, and Neem are natural insecticides which kill most insects. B.T. (*Bacillus Thuringiensis*) is a natural biological insecticide that is effective against caterpillars.

How Should I Choose/Use Less Toxic Pesticides?

Products labeled "Caution" are less toxic than products labeled "Warning."

Buy or prepare only the amount of pesticide you need for the present problem.

Apply pesticide according to label only to infested garden, never to the entire garden plot.

Never apply pesticides near streams, wells ponds, wetlands, or on bare or paved surfaces.

Clean up spills with kitty litter and dispose in sealed bags.

Why Shouldn't I Use Fertilizer?

Fertilizer from residential lawns and business landscaping washes into storm drains that run directly into Spa Creek. Nitrogen and Phosphorus in the fertilizer can cause algal blooms. These blooms cloud the water and consume oxygen making it undable to support underwater grasses or fish.

Proper fertilizer use can provide the nutrients you need without threatening the water quality of your creek.

If Necessary, What is the Proper Way to Apply Fertilizer?

Have your soil tested. Soil tests will determine the type and amount of fertilizer needed for your garden needs. Call MD Cooperative Extension at 1-800-342-2507 about testing.

Look for fertilizer that contains water insoluble nitrogen, abbreviated "WIN" which will release slowly over time.

Do not over-mow your lawn. Mowing your lawn too close can cause damage. Try to remove no more than 1/3 of the grass blade each time you mow. This can reduce weed problems up to 80%.

Always apply fertilizer during the most rigorous part of the growing season. Cool season grasses like fescue, bluegrass, and ryegrass should be fertilized in late summer or fall. Warm season grasses such as zoysia and Bermuda grass should be fertilized in the early summer. **Avoid fertilization in the spring when heavy rains will carry it into stream before it has a chance to be absorbed by your lawn.**

Plant Native Species, Recycle, Dispose

Consider converting a portion of your lawn into a native plant garden. These hardy plants are attractive and need little care or fertilizer.

Recycle grass clippings. Grass clippings return nutrients to the soil and can reduce the amount of fertilizer needed by up to 25% after several years. Leaving grass clippings on your lawn after mowing will not cause problems as long as grass is not allowed to grow too high.

Always dispose of pet waste from your lawn and pavement in the trash or toilet. Pet waste that is not properly removed leaches into streams and contributes to algal and bacterial growth.