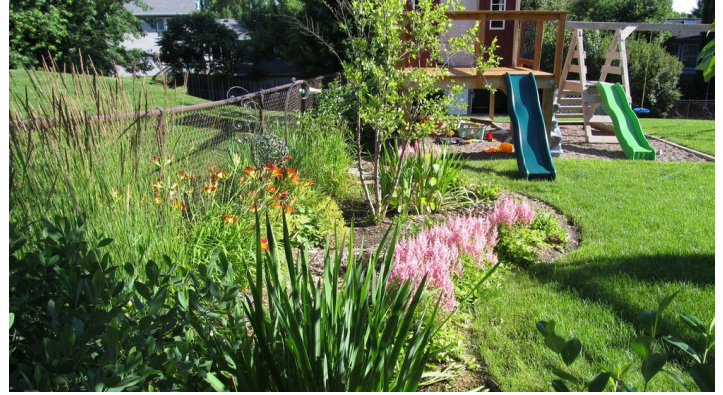




## How to manage your yard to protect our local lakes and keep the groundwater safe to drink.



### Did you know?

About 90% of Dakota County residents rely on groundwater as their primary drinking water source.

The greatest source of water pollution in cities is from stormwater runoff.

The primary runoff pollutants from your household are typically chemical pesticides/herbicides and fertilizers used on your lawn.

## Water Checklist of 14 BEST PRACTICES for your Yard

### Check the ones that you are doing

*List is also available online with the opportunity to request a yard sign*

*[www.eaganinvergroveheightswmo.org](http://www.eaganinvergroveheightswmo.org)*

- MOW HIGH AND WATER LESS** Mowing your grass at 4" helps shade out weeds and encourages roots to grow longer. The lawn will tolerate heat better and require less water. Most effective watering practices include watering early in the morning, close to the ground, slowly, deeply, and less frequently.
- USE AN EFFICIENT IRRIGATION SYSTEM** Check that your irrigation system is not overspraying onto sidewalks or streets, is not leaking, and uses water gauge sensors and smart controllers to monitor when water should turn on and off.
- USE NATURAL HERBICIDES, PESTICIDES OR FERTILIZERS** Runoff from chemical fertilizers causes harm to our lakes, streams, and ponds. Use natural fertilizers and amendments. Follow product instructions.

- **AERATE THE LAWN**    Compacted soils both increase runoff because water can't infiltrate the soil and decrease the health of the vegetation because there is little space for water, oxygen, nutrients, and room for roots to grow. Aerate your lawn every few years.
  
- **REDUCE THE SIZE OF THE LAWN**    Turf grass provides very few benefits to the ecosystem. For a more sustainable yard, reduce the size of the lawn by replacing some areas with perennial groundcover and gardens.
  
- **PLANT NATIVE GROUNDCOVER / FESCUE LAWN**    Traditional grass lawns require a high input of resources to maintain attractiveness (water, fertilizer, herbicide, mowing). Plant grass areas with low maintenance perennial groundcover, sedges, or pollinator lawns (<https://extension.umn.edu/yard-and-garden-news/ground-covers-gardens>)
  
- **LANDSCAPE WITH NATIVE PLANTS**    Native plants are best suited for our weather and soil and use far less water than generic plants. Pollinators and birds rely on native plants to thrive and raise their young. Think of the diversity of life that lives in the different layers (ground to canopy) and plant a variety of native trees, shrubs, and perennial plants to provide habitat for a variety of wildlife.
  
- **REMOVE INVASIVES**    Familiarize yourself with the invasive plants in your area (MN noxious weed list: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/roadsides/vegetation/pdf/noxiousweeds.pdf> ) and remove them from your property.
  
- **MULCH AND AMEND THE SOIL NATURALLY**    Compost, grass clippings, and fallen leaves improve the soil structure and add nutrients for your plants. Attach a leaf mulching blade to your lawnmower in the fall to mulch leaves into the lawn.
  
- **ADD A RAINGARDEN**    It's astounding how much rainwater runs off the roof in a storm. A raingarden is designed to collect and infiltrate runoff from roofs, driveways, and sidewalks before it flows into the storm sewer.
  
- **REDIRECT DOWNSPOUT WATER**    Collect rain runoff from the roof by redirecting water through the use of gutters, downspouts, rain chains, swales, and rain barrels. Rain barrel water can be used to water gardens and lawns another day.
  
- **ADD DRIVEWAY RUNOFF DIVERSIONS**    By installing a drain system such as a channel drain, rubber razor, or "speed bump", the driveway's rainwater runoff can be redirected into a swale or raingarden.
  
- **DISPOSE OF TOXINS SAFELY**    If you pour toxins into the street, the rain will move them through the stormwater system directly into the lakes and groundwater. Bring oils, paint thinners, paints and pesticides to the Dakota County Recycling Zone where they will be disposed of properly.
  
- **LIMIT USE OF SALT**    When it's time to replace the old water softener, find one that is an efficient or salt-free water treatment system. To combat winter's icy sidewalks and driveways, shovel first and then apply anti-icers (sand, kitty litter) lightly if needed.