Clean Water Begins in Your Yard

Home landscaping may contribute to harmful algal blooms or HABs.

With some changes in your gardening practices and lawn care, you can reduce nutrient pollution that leads to HABs, reduce flooding, sequester carbon, and increase biodiversity.

Keep Rain and Snow Where It Falls

In developed areas, impervious surfaces (pavement, roofs, etc.) and turf grass prevent precipitation from soaking into the ground where it can be filtered and replenish aquifers or flow into waterways. Instead, stormwater runs rapidly into storm drains, sewer systems and water bodies and can cause:

- Downstream flooding and infrastructure damage
- Stream bank erosion and water turbidity
- Combined storm and sanitary sewer system overflows
- Contaminated streams, rivers, lakes, and coastal water
- Nutrient pollution and resulting HABs- Harmful Algal Blooms
What to Do in Your Own Yard to Help

- Don't use lawn fertilizers with phosphates
- Reduce turf grass by planting no-mow native lawns, areas of native plants, native trees & shrubs
- Plant rain gardens
- Disconnect downspouts or redirect them into yards or rain barrels
- Install permeable pavement
- Pick up pet waste
- Keep dead leaves and other yard debris out of stormwater drains
- Inspect and empty septic systems every 3-5 years, keep septic systems away from large tree roots, don’t drive over them, and use water saving devices and practices to limit the chances of overflow.
- If you live on the banks of a lake, stream, or river, a riparian buffer of native plants will help absorb and filter rainwater before it enters the waterbody.

Note: Yard improvements alone will not solve HABs, but we all need to do our part.

Resources:

- [www.epa.gov/soakuptherain/what-you-can-do-soak-rain](http://www.epa.gov/soakuptherain/what-you-can-do-soak-rain)
- [www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure/what-green-infrastructure](http://www.epa.gov/green-infrastructure/what-green-infrastructure)
- [www.homegrownnationalpark.org](http://www.homegrownnationalpark.org)
- [www.cleanlakesalliance.org/leaves/](http://www.cleanlakesalliance.org/leaves/)
- [www.epa.gov/nps/nonpoint-source-wetlandriparian-management](http://www.epa.gov/nps/nonpoint-source-wetlandriparian-management)