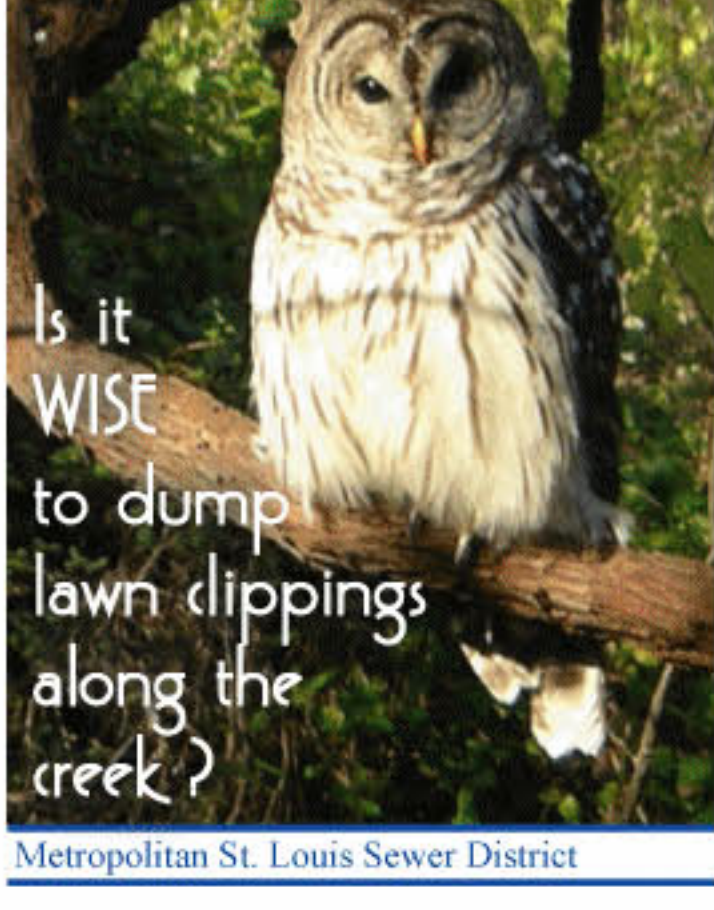


Yard Waste and Our Environment

Is it WISE to dump lawn clippings along the creek?

Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District

Did you know that if yard waste, such as leaves, grass clippings, weeds, prunings, brush, and small twigs that are naturally found around the home, are disposed of along a creek or in the storm drain it can impact...



Water Quality

Yard waste decaying in creeks and rivers decomposes in a process that removes oxygen from the water. Fish and other aquatic life can't survive in water with low oxygen. As yard waste decomposes, plant nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus are also released. These nutrients promote the excessive growth of algae in the water. As the water becomes polluted, it does not support aquatic life and becomes a health hazard.

Erosion

Leaves and woody debris naturally accumulate in streams and creeks. However, when you collect and dispose of yard waste along creek banks, the added yard waste covers the ground and keeps out the natural vegetation that helps to stabilize the bank. This practice leads to increased erosion and sedimentation that clouds creek water and destroys habitat for aquatic life. Improper disposal of yard waste increases the accumulation of debris which in turn can lead to blockages that inhibit proper drainage. Although it is common for some homeowners to dispose of yard waste along creek banks, it is not a good practice.

Onsite Options

Composting

Is an easy, inexpensive and natural way to dispose of leaves, tree trimmings, and brush. Compost can be used as fertilizer around the yard, which reduces the need for chemical fertilizers that can contaminate storm water runoff draining into creeks and rivers. Spreading compost around bushes and flowers helps the soil to retain moisture and controls weeds. This means less watering, less use of herbicides and lower costs.



Water Sprinkling

Do not over-water the lawn or garden. Over-watering may increase leaching of fertilizers to ground and surface water. When your lawn or garden needs watering, use slow-watering techniques such as trickle irrigation or soaker hoses. Such devices reduce runoff, and are more effective than sprinklers.

What can YOU do to prevent yard waste from polluting our water?

- Never allow yard waste to be washed down or put into the storm drains.
- Do not sweep or blow grass clippings along the street or into a storm drain.
- Do not dump grass or yard waste onto a creek bank or area where it will be washed into creeks and rivers.
- Control soil erosion on your property by planting native trees and ground cover to stabilize erosion-prone areas.
- Compost your leaves, brush, grass clippings and other yard waste.
- Use the "Community Resources" identified on the back side of this brochure for further assistance.

Taller Grass



Mow grass higher and leave grass clippings on the lawn to retain moisture and provide nutrients to the soil as they decompose. When you mow, set the blades to cut the grass two or three inches high. Most grasses are healthiest at this height, and this also helps control weeds. Also, taller grass along storm water drainage areas helps filter runoff and stabilize soil better with deeper roots.

MSD Maintenance

Yard waste that is swept into inlets and catch basins builds up and can clog the storm drains and cause flooding problems. This build up of yard waste can make it difficult for the drainage system to carry away excessive amounts of water during storms which can



lead to flooded streets and basements. When storm water drains do not function efficiently, more maintenance is needed to clean out blockages and these costs can be passed on to the customer in the form of higher sewer rates.

Laws Governing Yard Waste

- The Federal Clean Water Act mandates that the County, municipalities and MSD take steps to prevent pollution of storm water runoff.
- Missouri State law bans the disposal of yard waste in landfills.
- Saint Louis County Waste Management Code and Municipal ordinances prohibit the dumping of yard waste.
- It is unlawful to dump yard waste into the storm drain or creeks. To report the improper disposal of yard waste in the storm drain or the creek contact the Metropolitan Sewer District at (314) 768-6260.

Community Resources

- Contact your local waste hauler for yard waste pick up services.
- Contact your municipality for a recycling center in your area.
- For a listing of County residential recycling centers call the Saint Louis County Waste Management Hotline at (314) 286-9200 for assistance.

Remember No Dumping!
Only Rain to the Storm Drain

Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District
Division of Environmental Compliance



To contact MSD Customer Service call (314) 768-6260 or visit us on the Web at: www.msdlouis.mo.us

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