



# ARE YOU A WATER GUARDIAN GARDENER?



## TAKE THE LAWN CARE & LANDSCAPING CHALLENGE

Most water entering Rochester's storm sewers is NOT treated before it enters our creeks, rivers and lakes. When excess plant debris and yard chemicals leave our lawns, water quality and aquatic life suffer. There are many easy steps YOU can take to help protect our water!

**HERE'S YOUR CHALLENGE:** put an "X" next to those steps you already practice. Then pick any ONE of the left-overs and promise you'll adopt it today. It'll be good for our water and good for your pocket-book!

- I leave grass clippings on my lawn as a natural fertilizer.
- I test my soils to learn if I need to apply extra fertilizer.
- Since my soil has lots of phosphorus, I use "P"-free fertilizer ("0" as the middle number).
- I apply fertilizers at the correct rate and at the right time (in the fall).
- I spot treat weeds and only apply herbicides when needed.
- I maintain a healthy lawn by mowing grass to a height of 2-3", seeding in the spring & fall, and aerating & de-thatching in the fall.
- I buy hardy plants that are relatively pest-free and suited to my sites.
- I've reduced the amount of maintained turf and increased naturalized areas.
- I have a 15' to 25' buffer strip of tall grass or plantings along water bodies.
- I mulch flower beds, shrubs and trees.
- I have planted rain gardens to receive run-off from my roof (and I direct downspouts away from hard surfaces).
- I keep lawn & garden chemicals, garden debris, lawn clippings, and leaves off hard surfaces.
- I NEVER dump anything in storm drains.

### LEARN MORE ABOUT BECOMING A WATER GUARDIAN GARDENER

- University of Minnesota Extension Service, Olmsted County (285-8253)
- University of Minnesota Extension Service Web ([www.extension.umn.edu](http://www.extension.umn.edu))
- City of Rochester Storm Water Web Site (328-2440, [www.rochesterstormwater.com](http://www.rochesterstormwater.com))

