

Green Tips around the home!

- If you choose to apply fertilizer on your property, read the label carefully and always use precautions in using fertilizer products.
- Use only the amount recommended on the product label. Any amount left over should never be mixed with other fertilizer or pesticide products.
- Avoid applying fertilizer products outside on windy or rainy days. Never apply fertilizer near storm drains or creeks.
- Maintain existing trees on your property, and plant trees and shrubs that prevent erosion and support infiltration of water into the soil.
- Disperse organic deposits such as grass, wood chips, and leaves on soil to act as a compost system to prevent erosion and runoff.
- If you select a professional lawn care service, select a company that uses practices to minimize the use of fertilizers and pesticides.
- Misuse of fertilizers can damage the soil's natural resources essential for healthy grasses and plants. Contact Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES) Office or a garden supply center for a soil test kit.

References

Polluted Runoff (Nonpoint Source Pollution) Do's and Don'ts Around the Home

<http://www.epa.gov/owow/nps/dosdont.html>

Wastes-Resources Conservation Reduce, Reuse, Recycle-Composting

<http://www.epa.gov/epawaste/conserve/rrrr/composting/questions.htm>

Alabama Cooperative Extension System (ACES) Soil Testing Laboratory

<http://www.aces.edu/anr/soillab/>

Stormwater Hotline 205.930.1999



Jefferson County Department of Health
1400 Sixth Avenue South • Birmingham, AL 35233
WWW.JCDH.ORG

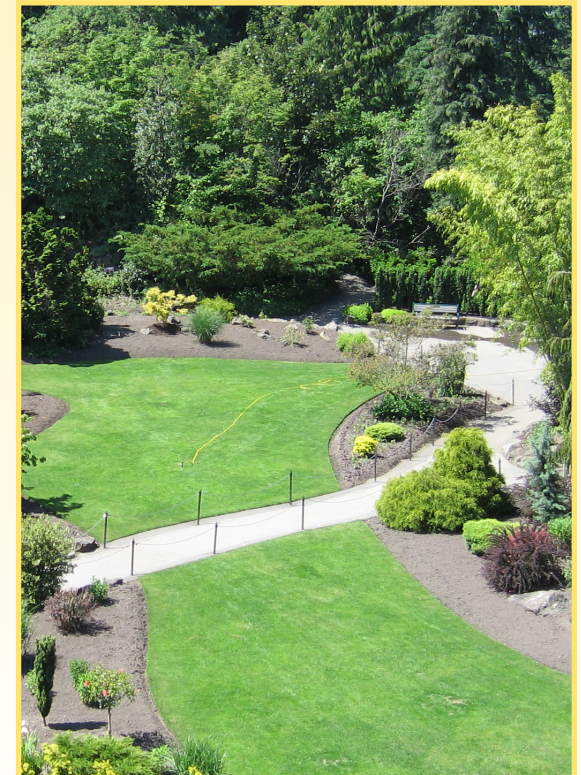


Jefferson County Department of Health
Watershed Protection Program

in Cooperation with the

Stormwater Management Authority

Keep It Green and Simple





Fertilizer Versus Compost

Fertilizer contains large quantities of nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorous that can potentially wash into storm drains and ultimately into a lake or stream. Nutrients from fertilizer may prompt algal blooms, causing aquatic plants to over grow and suffocate other aquatic life. As a result, algal blooms can remove the oxygen in the water that fish and other organisms need to breathe.

Compost can enhance soil structure and provide nutrients from a composition of decaying organic matter. Compost allows natural fertilizer to be applied to lawns and gardens assisting in the condition of the soil and increasing the nutrients. Compost has been discovered to suppress plant disease and pests, reduce or remove the need for chemical fertilizer, and increase agricultural crops' growth.

What are the Benefits to Compost?

Compost can prevent pollutants from entering into storm water runoff and reaching surface water resources. Another advantage of using compost is that it has been shown to prevent erosion and siltation near water banks, creeks, lakes, streams, roadways and golf courses.

Composting yard trimmings save landfill space and lowers methane production in landfills. The composting process can absorb odors and treat organic compounds. It binds heavy metals and prevents them from transferring to water resources being absorbed by plants and contaminated soils.

Compost has the ability to help restore poor soils. Composting strengthens the production of micro-organisms that break down organic matter to create humus. Humus is a rich nutrient-filled material that increases the nutrients in soils and helps maintain moisture.



Composting is Easy and It Makes Sense!

As an alternative to organic matter entering into storm drains, streams, creeks or landfills, compost can be converted into a beneficial resource which can even be reused around the household or environment.

Listed below are examples of how compost can be beneficial in your area:

- Farmers can use compost to enhance produce and grassy areas along their property.
- Landscapers can use compost as a soil modification for decorative purposes along properties, golf courses and playing fields.
- Landfill operators can use compost to cover waste areas onsite where waste material has been buried and during revitalization projects.
- Garden operators can use compost for improving plant and forest seedling crops in reforestation projects and for preventing certain plant diseases.
- Public operations can use compost for landscaping roadways, recreational parks, and other public property for remediating contaminated or weathered road sites.
- Homeowners use compost to enrich gardens and soils around trees and shrubs.