Earth-Friendly Lawn Care Tips

- Don't guess... soil test — Contact MSU Oakland County Extension and purchase a soil test kit. Ask for the organic matter test as well as the test for basic nutrients. For information, contact the Oakland County Garden Hotline: 248-858-0902.

- Mow high and let the clippings lie — Set the mower blade at the highest setting, leaving 2-1/2 to 3 inches on the grass blade. Tall grass encourages deep roots and shades out weeds. If you mulch your grass, you can reduce fertilizer quantities by 25% or more each year.

- Select earth-friendly fertilizers — Fertilizers with slow-release nitrogen and low or no phosphorus are recommended.

- Sweep fertilizer from paved surfaces back onto the lawn — Fertilizer left on sidewalks and driveways can easily wash into storm drains, the Rouge River, and nearby lakes.

- Avoid weed-and-feed combination products — Combination products often add unnecessary herbicides to the landscape. A better approach is to identify the weed and selectively spot treat — or dig weeds by hand.

Web Sites
FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

SE Oakland County Water Authority (SOCWA)
www.socwa.org/lawn_and_garden.htm

SOCWA website topics: healthy lawns, rain gardens, naturescaping, tree care, composting, and more

Oakland County Water Resources Office
www.oakgov.com/water

Alliance of Rouge Communities
www.allianceofrougecommunities.com
(includes map of subwatersheds and Rouge video)

Friends of the Rouge
www.therouge.org

Rouge River National Wet Weather Demonstration Project
www.rougeriver.org

Auburn Hills — www.auburnhills.org
Beverly Hills — www.villagebeverlyhills.com
Bingham Farms — www.binghamfarms.org
Birmingham — www.ci.birmingham.mi.us
Bloomfield Hills — www.bloomfieldhills.org
Bloomfield Township — www.bloomfieldtwp.org
Farmington Hills — www.fthgov.org
Franklin — www.franklin.mi.us
Lakeland Village — www.lakelandvillage.org
Pontiac — www.pontiac.mi.us
Rochester Hills — www.rochesterhills.org
Southfield — www.cityofsouthfield.com
Troy — www.troymi.gov
West Bloomfield — www.twp.west-bloomfield.mi.us

Tips For A Rouge-Friendly Landscape

Distributed by Rouge River municipalities, Main 1-2 Subwatershed

Auburn Hills • Beverly Hills • Bingham Farms • Birmingham • Bloomfield Hills • Bloomfield Township • Farmington Hills • Franklin • Lakeland Village • Pontiac • Rochester Hills • Southfield • Southfield Township • Troy • West Bloomfield Township

WHERE POLLUTION IS CONCERNED,
EVERY HOME IS WATERFRONT PROPERTY!

Storm water runoff from lawns, gardens, driveways, and rooftops contributes to the pollution of the Rouge River and nearby lakes. Water from rains and sprinkler systems picks up soil, fertilizers, pesticides, oil, leaves, grass clippings, and other materials. Water then flows into storm drains which discharge to the Rouge River.

Runoff containing phosphorus and nitrogen is a particular concern for the Rouge River in Oakland County. Excess amounts of these nutrients can become sources of pollution.

Yard Waste Management Tips

Why not compost, mulch, and recycle yard clippings?

Follow the tips below to ensure a healthy watershed!

- Compost your clippings — Mix leaves and grass clippings with soil and water in a backyard compost bin. Use the finished compost as a soil amendment, natural fertilizer or top-dressing around plants. Compost used in the home landscape holds water and helps filter pollutants. For how-to-do-it tips, see www.socwa.org.

- Mulch your leaves — Chop or shred leaves with your mower. Leaf mulch can be used around ornamental plants, shrubs, and trees. Mulch reduces the need for watering and weeding and gradually contributes organic matter to the soil. In the fall, mow dry leaves and let the fragments remain on the lawn where they will contribute organic matter and nutrients to the soil.

- “Bag It” — If you have extra leaves and grass clippings, place at curb for yard waste pickup. Contact your local DPW Office for pickup requirements.

Rouge River Main 1-2 Subwatershed communities are working together to promote earth-friendly landscape practices to protect the Rouge River Watershed and local waterways.