



Town of Babylon
Department of Environmental Control
Phase II Program
South Shore Estuary Reserve Member "Preserve the Reserve"



Best Management Practices for Homeowners to Reduce Stormwater Pollution

The Town of Babylon would like to provide homeowners with recommendations to help protect our surface waters. Many common activities can inadvertently pollute our environment. After a rain or snow storm, pollutants from certain activities can easily runoff into stormdrains located in streets. Stormdrains are often connected to nearby surface waters, so the pollutants that may flow into them can end up in our creeks, lakes, the Great South Bay, and our ocean.

- **Never dump oil, paint, garbage, or any other chemicals down a stormdrain.** They don't lead to sewage treatment plants and these materials can end up in our creeks, lakes, and bay!
- **When washing your car, don't direct the flow of runoff toward your street and into stormdrains.** One way to prevent this is to wash your car on the lawn, or direct water flow to the lawn. Also consider taking your car to a car wash, because they recycle the water that is used during the wash.
- **Don't empty pool water down a storm drain!** Water from swimming pools and hot tubs often contain high levels of chlorine. Discharging chlorinated pool/spa water into storm drains is potentially harmful to fish and other aquatic life. The proper procedure to dispose of pool water is to stop adding chlorine well before discharge, and then discharge it on your lawn slowly without creating runoff.
- **If you have pets, make sure to clean up after they eliminate! Failure to clean up after your pet on public property is a violation of Chapter 106 of Babylon Town Code** Pet waste reduces water quality in our watersheds and bay. The Town of Babylon has a "Pooper Scooper Program". We provide, free pooper scoopers to residents. This encourages everyone to "pick up" and protect our watersheds and bay. You can pick up a free pooper scooper at the Town of Babylon, Animal Shelter located at 51 Lamar St, (Off of Edison Ave) West Babylon NY 11704.

As homeowners, we can put ourselves, our families, our pets, wildlife, and our environment at risk when improperly using lawn chemicals. Many of these chemicals, once introduced to the environment, may persist for many years. When these chemicals are applied on your lawn, they can easily runoff into stormdrains after a precipitation event, and migrate into our groundwater and surface waters. A chemically dependent lawn is more prone to disease and less able to handle stresses from drought, heat, and insects.

- **Applying fertilizer to your lawn between November 1st and April 1st is prohibited in Suffolk County!** The lawn does not utilize fertilizer in the months outside the growing season. The best time to fertilize is in the spring, and make sure to apply only as much as is indicated on the label of the manufacturers guidelines. If you fertilize midsummer, you're feeding the weeds! Over-fertilizing leads to nitrogen loading of our water bodies, which leads to algae growth and low dissolved oxygen which can suffocate fish.
- **If you absolutely must use pesticides, make sure to follow the directions on the label for the pest you are trying to treat, the site of infestation, the life stage of pest, and whether the product is specified for indoor or outdoor use. Always follow precautionary statements on the product label, including statements of practical treatment and notes to physicians.** Ensure that children and pets are not to be in the area being treated, remove toys, cover pools, sandboxes, and playgrounds, remove shoes before entering the house, and wash your clothes separately after treating. If something is toxic to pests you can assume it may also be dangerous for other biologic life including ourselves! Many pesticides are known carcinogenics (cancer causing) so be very careful where you apply.
- **Please don't blow leaves, and dirt into the town streets.** This material will clog the stormdrain system and introduces leaves and sediment into waterways.
- **There are many alternatives to using herbicides:** In garden beds, a 2-3 inch deep layer of mulch will help keep weeds down and allow your plants to grow. A "living mulch" of ground cover plants or low perennials planted beneath trees and shrubs will add beauty and shade out annual weeds. A non-toxic way of controlling weeds is to use lemon juice, vinegar, or citrus oils such as thyme, and spray onto weeds. Other methods is to pour boiling water over weeds, or you can get your hands dirty and pull out the weeds yourself!

For more information on green lawns, garden tips, and non-toxic lawn care visit the New York State Department of Environmental Control website at www.dec.ny.gov/public/43593.html For further information on the Town's Stormwater Management Program please contact the Department of Environmental Control, Town of Babylon at 631-422-7640. To report an illicit discharge down a storm drain please contact the Stormwater Discharge Hotline at Performance Management/Citizen Services at 631-957-7474