



## Storm Water Best Management Practices for Professional Landscapers

### Did you know that there are two sewer systems?

- The **sanitary sewer** collects waste water from homes, business and industry from sinks, toilets and other outlets. It goes to the water treatment plant for treatment.
- The **storm sewer** collects runoff from streets. There is no treatment for the storm sewer; storm water goes into the ground and eventually into the ground water. Anything dumped or left in the street or gutter is pollution that can enter retention basins where children and pets play and from there can infiltrate and contaminate our ground water. Discharges that can introduce pollutants into our waterways through storm water runoff *include soaps, automotive fluids, litter, sediment, pesticides and many other materials washed off roadways, sidewalks, buildings, vehicles and other equipment.*

Landscaping involves such activities as digging, trenching, irrigation, application of pesticides and fertilizers, mulching, and trimming of bushes and trees. These activities can generate soil, yard waste, and garden chemicals. Runoff from over-watering or rainfall carries these pollutants into the waterways where they impact water quality. Yard and garden chemicals can be harmful to beneficial insects and fish and contaminate ground and surface waters. Leaves, tree trimmings and grass clippings not only carry harmful chemicals into waterways, but can also clog storm drains, causing street flooding. Properly managing these materials can prevent these pollutants from entering the storm drain system. Best Management Practices include proper handling, storage and disposal of landscaping materials.

### Best Management Practices for Professional Landscapers

- When using pesticides and fertilizers, take care to follow directions carefully and only use what is necessary to control the problem. Do not over-water to cause runoff of water contaminated with these chemicals.
- Do not dispose of leaves, grass clippings and tree trimming debris in the street. Pick up and dispose of appropriately, separate from other trash.
- Sweep driveways and walks instead of washing down with water.
- Prevent soil erosion by digging during dry weather and utilizing mulch, rock or fast growing plants to stabilize the soil quickly.
- Avoid creating large areas of concrete patio or other smooth surfaces. Consider pavers or other patio surfaces that encourage infiltration of water into the ground instead of running off into streets and gutters.
- Conserve water. Use drip irrigation, soaker hoses or micro-spray systems to prevent over-watering.
- Use organic or non-toxic fertilizers.
- Do not fertilize near the water line of private lakes.
- Store fertilizers, pesticides and other yard chemicals in a covered area to prevent accidental runoff.
- Find alternatives to conventional pesticides or use one specific to the type of pest you are trying to control.
- Read all labels carefully and follow directions exactly to avoid over application.
- Rinse empty containers and use rinse water as you would use the product, do not pour in gutters or storm inlets.
- Dispose of rinsed, empty containers in the trash.
- Educate your clients to use the same care in maintaining their yard as you do.

*Only Rain in the Storm Drain*