

Carrollton Environmental Services  
**THE STORMWATER READER**

November 2014

## TIPS TO PREVENT STORMWATER POLLUTION

### Let's Celebrate with Non-Toxic Holidays!

The –ber (or brrr) months are here and these herald the holidays! No time left to waste now. Soon family and friends will visit and you need to get your house ready. This is a good time to save money and the environment by using non-hazardous cleaning products that you can make at home with ingredients typically found in a pantry.

#### Vinegar as An All-Purpose Cleaner

Vinegar actually cleans much like an all-purpose cleaner. All you need is to mix a solution of equal parts of water and vinegar in a spray bottle and you have a solution that will clean most areas of your home. Vinegar is a great natural cleaning product as well as a disinfectant and deodorizer. It's always best to test any cleaner on a hidden area first to make sure no color change or damage occurs. Be aware that improperly diluted vinegar is acidic and can eat away at tile grout. Vinegar should not be used on marble surfaces, either. And, don't worry about your home smelling like vinegar. The smell disappears when it dries. Some common uses for vinegar in the rooms of your house are. . .

*Bathroom:* Clean the bathtub, toilet, sink, and counter-tops. Use pure vinegar in the toilet bowl to get rid of unsightly rings. Flush the toilet to allow the water level to go down before pouring the undiluted vinegar around the inside of the rim. Scrub down the bowl. You can also mop the floor in the bathroom with a vinegar/water solution. Vinegar will also eat away the soap scum and hard water stains on your fixtures and tile leaving them shiny and beautiful.

*Kitchen:* Clean the top of the stove with equal parts vinegar and water. Most appliances can be cleaned with this same all-purpose mix of vinegar and water. Counter-top surfaces can be cleaned and disinfected with the same spray. Use vinegar to clean floors and be amazed at the fresh shiny results.

*Laundry Room:* You can use vinegar as a natural fabric softener. This can be especially helpful for families with sensitive skin issues. Add ½ cup of vinegar to the rinse cycle in place of store bought fabric softener. Vinegar has the added benefit of breaking down laundry detergent more effectively. Vinegar can be used to clean the washing machine as well. But never mix vinegar with bleach.

#### How to Make an Aromatic Vinegar Spray

In a spray bottle, mix the following ingredients,  
1/2 cup distilled white vinegar                      1/2 cup water  
12-24 drops of essential oils for mood-setting, such as:

*Lavender with tea tree:* To relax.

*Lavender and peppermint:* To get pepped up for cleaning.

*Lavender and orange:* To lift your spirits.

*Lemon:* To brighten your mood.

(References: [greencleaning.com](http://greencleaning.com)/About.com)



### Did You Know?

Cooking oil from  
frying your turkey or  
cooking other meats  
and foods can be  
recycled.

### DON'T BE A TURKEY...



Recycle your  
used cooking  
oil for FREE  
this Holiday  
Season!

Monday, December 1 &  
Tuesday, December 2  
8 a.m.-6 p.m.; Daily  
Central Service Center, 2711 Nimitz Lane



## CAR CARE FOR CLEANER WATER

We all know that running cars contribute to air pollution. But did you know that cars could also impact water quality? As we drive, our cars and trucks track tiny bits of tires, brakes and rusty metal on the street. When we park, our cars and trucks may leave stains of oil, grease and transmission fluid on driveways and parking lots. Less visible are the tiny exhaust particles that gradually settle out of the air or come down with the rain or snow.

What happens to all this “car dirt” when it rains? Rain and melting snow wash auto pollutants off the pavement, down the gutter, and into storm drains. Under these drains are storm sewers—pipes that carry the dirty water directly to our lakes, streams or wetlands.

But even on sunny days, polluted water often flows out of storm sewers. Take a walk to a small stream in your town. Do you see clusters of foam? Streaks of green, red, orange or blue? An oily sheen?

The foam may come from soapy water that runs down the street when we wash cars in our driveways. The bright colored streaks are probably antifreeze drained from radiators. The oily sheen may come from used motor oil dumped down the storm drain or leaking from a vehicle.

You can help stop this kind of pollution. Explain to your family and friends that storm sewers carry water directly to our lakes and streams. They do not connect to wastewater treatment plants.

Courtesy of Wisconsin DNR

## WHAT DO LEAVES AND STORM DRAINS HAVE IN COMMON?

Hopefully nothing!

Please always bag, leave them on the grass or compost your leaves. Never rake or blow leaves into the street or into the storm drain. Although they are “natural,” leaves not only clog storm drains, they also alter the ecosystems of local water bodies when dumped in larger amounts than would naturally fall there.

Other stormwater-friendly lawn tips for this time of year include:

- If you fertilize more than once a year, consider cutting back to once a year.
- More is not always better! Read the directions and use only the amount directed.
- Check the weather forecast, and don't apply fertilizer when rain is predicted.
- Clean up any spills by sweeping the product back onto the lawn. Never sweep fertilizer toward a paved surface or storm drain!

Courtesy of The University of Rhode Island

