

“Fall Clean-up”

It is always sad to see summer come to an end! The days are now getting shorter and the air is crisp. But you still may have some work to do around your yard to get ready for winter. Did you know that dumping your leaves and yard waste at a storm drain, ditch, or stream is considered stormwater pollution? Anything other than stormwater entering a storm drain or waterway is considered an illicit discharge. All stormwater flows directly to Lake Erie untreated. Yard waste and leaves contain a high amount of nutrients, like phosphorus and nitrogen. When yard waste is dumped in the storm sewer system, those nutrients end up in Lake Erie. We have all heard about the Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) in Lake Erie and these nutrients help feed the HAB. Help us prevent the HAB by properly disposing of yard waste and by following these tips:

- Compost your grass clippings and yard waste. You can construct your own compost bin or you can purchase one. Be sure to place your bin away from any stream, ditch, or storm drain. Compost bins can be purchased through the Lake County Soil and Water Conservation District. The compost can then be used in the spring in your flower beds and gardens.
- Use a mulching mower. Mulched leaves and grass clippings make a great fertilizer for your lawn.
- Remember that fertilizer also contains nutrients. Perform a soil test and only fertilize when necessary! The best time to fertilize your lawn is fall. Also, try to use a slow release fertilizer that does not contain phosphorus.

For more information, contact the Lake County Stormwater Management Department at www.lakecountyohio.gov/smd or (440) 350-5900. Like us on Facebook!