

BEST PRACTICES



This Spring Go Green! Spring Cleaning Tips from Stream Team



It's time to break out the brooms, rags and cleaners! In our annual tradition of cleaning our homes top to bottom each spring, you may have some questions. Is this product safe to use in my home? Will my actions today add pollution to nearby rivers, lakes or streams? What should I do with my unused household cleaners, paints and oils? Follow the suggestions below and commit to a safe and green spring cleaning.

Why Use Safer Cleaning Products

The cleaning products we use in and around our homes can end up in local waterways. Some cleaners contain compounds that cannot be removed during wastewater treatment processes. Cleaners used outside our homes may runoff untreated into nearby rivers, lakes and streams. If you are unsure if your product is safe or not, or want alternatives to harsh cleaners, visit Thurston County's Safer Products webpage, <http://tinyurl.com/saferhouseholds> for sound advice!

Outdoor Cleaning and Stormwater

During your spring cleaning activities outside, you may be adding to stormwater pollution. Sweep paved areas around your home instead of using pressure washers. If you need to pressure wash your home, divert wash water to your lawn or flower beds. This way you can make sure paint flakes aren't reaching the storm drain. Use a shop vac to clean-up any paint chips that land on hard surfaces to prevent stormwater contamination.

Does your car need to be washed this spring? Take your car to a commercial car wash instead of washing your car in your driveway. Dirt, heavy metals, and soaps can enter stormwater from your driveway. If you need to wash your car at home, wash it on a grassy or gravel surface to prevent direct runoff.

Finally, check the items you have stored in your garage or sheds. Are you using these materials anymore? Are they stored safely? Make sure pesticides, fertilizers and other outdoor chemicals are stored correctly, inside secondary containment like a plastic tub, in dry places, or disposed of properly if you aren't using them.

Disposing of Hazardous Household Waste

Spring cleaning is the perfect time to switch from hazardous cleaners to green ones. Additionally, it's a great time to take inventory of your hazardous materials, and dispose of any items that are no longer usable. Take these steps to dispose of your old hazardous household waste:

1. Store in original container and do not remove the label.
2. Store hazardous products in a large plastic tote to prevent and contain any spills or leaks.

3. Spilled or leaked products need to be handled as hazardous materials. Follow the label instructions for cleaning the spill.
4. Never combine different products together. A combination of products could create hazardous fumes, ignite or explode.
4. Take all unwanted products and any materials used to clean up spills to Thurston County's HazoHouse. (For more information call HazoHouse at 360-867-2912 or email ThurstonSolidWaste@co.thurston.wa.us.)

Spring Gardening Tips

Spring is a perfect time to remulch your garden. Mulch helps soil retain water for plants, controls soil erosion from your property and suppresses weed growth. Organic mulches eventually break down, adding valuable nutrients and organic matter to your soil. Plus, it looks really great!

Are you pulling out your mower for the first spring mow? Adjust the mower height to 2-3" to keep your lawn healthy. A taller lawn requires less fertilizer and water and it shades out weed seeds in the soil. Don't forget to sharpen or replace your mower blade! Tearing or shredding grass due to a dull blade causes stress for your lawn making it vulnerable to diseases.

Need to purchase a replacement mower this spring? Consider investing in a mulching mower. Mulching mowers leave some grass on your lawn, which provides slow-releasing nutrients to your lawn. You'll save both time and money, and keep your lawn green!

And, remember, the positive actions you take this spring will protect our rivers, lakes and streams. This spring, go green!

Remember!

It is unlawful to dispose of chemicals or dirty water into the storm drain system, including drainage ditches, storm drains and stormwater ponds.

***To report a spill or illicit discharge (dumping),
call the WA Department of Ecology 24-hour Spill Hotline: 360-407-6300.***

Source: Stream Team News, Spring 2018