

## Placing leaves, grass clippings, or other yardwaste in the drainage system or streets is a violation of City Code Sec. 96-27.


The drainage system is designed to convey stormwater safely and efficiently away from your property. Leaves and other yardwaste clog this system and can cause localized flooding. In addition, some of this material gets washed downstream, degrading the quality of our waterways and adding nutrients that contribute to unsightly algae blooms.

Every year, the City spends considerable staff time and money removing illegally dumped leaves and other yardwaste from the City's stormwater drainage system and streets. Properly disposing of your yardwaste allows those resources to be used to address other maintenance concerns.



Stormwater Quality Division  
Environmental Resource Center  
290 E. Central St.  
Springfield, Missouri 65802  
Phone: 417-864-1996  
[www.springfieldmo.gov/stormwater](http://www.springfieldmo.gov/stormwater)

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CITY OF  
Springfield  
840 Boonville Avenue  
Springfield, MO 65802

# How to: Dispose of Yardwaste Legally



Contact the  
**CITIZEN RESOURCE CENTER**  
**864-1010**  
**[city@springfieldmo.gov](mailto:city@springfieldmo.gov)**  
**840 Boonville Ave.**  
**Springfield, Mo. 65802**



## Yardwaste is a Valuable Resource

Grass clippings and leaves add valuable organic matter and nutrients to the soil. Follow these practices for healthy lawns and gardens, and healthy streams and lakes.

**Mow it tall. Let it fall.** Mowing height is important for the health and vigor of grass. It is suggested to not remove more than 1/3 of the grass height at one time. Taller mowing heights encourage better root development. Following this practice, clippings will naturally decompose and will not contribute to thatch build-up (a layer of dead grass stems at the soil surface).

**Mulch mow leaves.** Mow leaves frequently and no more than one inch of fallen leaves at one time. The finely chopped leaves will decompose into the soil. By mulch mowing frequently in the fall, you can incorporate up to six inches of leaves into your lawn.

**Recycle or compost.** Yardwaste is accepted at the City's Yardwaste Recycling Center and, in small amounts, at the City's Recycling Centers. It is processed into landscaping mulch or compost to be reused in the community. Information about locations, hours, and quantity guidelines are available by calling the Recycling Hotline at **864-1904** or by visiting the City's website at [www.springfieldmo.gov/recycling](http://www.springfieldmo.gov/recycling). You can also start your own compost pile. Excess grass clippings, leaves, and certain kitchen scraps make excellent compost that can be added to garden beds or worked into your lawn to improve the soil.

**Keep streets and storm drains clean.** Remember, it is a violation of City Code to place yardwaste in the drainage system or streets. Keep our streams and lakes healthy and minimize work for City crews by keeping yardwaste out of the street and stormwater drainage system.

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## What is the Issue?

Storm drains flow directly into local streams and lakes, unlike indoor sewer drains which flow to a wastewater treatment plant. Stormwater runoff can become polluted by picking up whatever is in its path as it flows across parking lots, streets, and yards, including motor oil, dirt, and lawn chemicals. Polluted stormwater runoff and materials that get dumped in storm drains are a threat to the water quality of our streams and lakes. Leaves, grass clippings, and other yardwaste contain nutrients. When these materials are placed in streets and storm drains, they can end up in our streams and lakes where the nutrients in them can cause the water to be green, murky, and covered with algae.

When storm drains get clogged with leaves and debris, water no longer drains from the street – it ponds along streets and can flood intersections and homes. Localized street flooding can damage property and be dangerous to people and animals. Leaves and debris placed on the street can also be a hazard to vehicles.

## Other Ways to Protect Water Quality

- Don't over-fertilize your lawn. Get a soil test first.
- Minimize the use of pesticides/herbicides.
- Plant trees.
- Plant a rain garden.
- Install a rain barrel.
- Practice environmentally responsible lawn care. The Show-Me Yards & Neighborhoods program offers information, including alternatives to chemicals, mowing and watering techniques, and native plant and tree information at [www.springfieldmo.gov/showmeyards](http://www.springfieldmo.gov/showmeyards). Brochures and information on scheduled workshops and one-on-one site visits are available by calling **864-2006**.
- Report stormwater pollution by calling **864-1010**.
- Get involved with a local watershed group:
  - James River Basin Partnership  
[www.jamesriverbasin.com](http://www.jamesriverbasin.com)
  - Watershed Committee of the Ozarks  
[www.watershedcommittee.org](http://www.watershedcommittee.org)

