

Top Ten Ways to Keep Our Water Clean

Home and garden pesticides and fertilizers are contaminating California creeks, rivers, and oceans. Garden chemicals cause pollution when people dump them down drains or when they are washed into gutters, drains, and creeks by rain, garden watering, or hosing down sidewalks. Here's what you can do to help.



Be Careful with Garden Chemicals

- 1. Avoid using pesticides.** Be sure you have identified a specific pest problem before applying any pesticide. If treatment is necessary, use non-chemical methods or least toxic pesticides where ever possible. Ask a UC Master Gardener for help.
- 2. Keep fertilizer and pesticides off of hard surfaces** like sidewalks or driveways. Sweep any material that accidently gets on hard surfaces back onto lawns.
- 3. Don't over use fertilizer.** More is not better. Actively growing turf, flowering shrubs, some annuals and fruit trees require regular fertilization but ornamental trees do not. Use slow-release fertilizers and be sure to measure and apply them according to label directions.
- 4. Avoid using pyrethroid insecticides** to control ants. Manage ants by reducing food sources, excluding them from homes, and using baits in containers.
- 5. Use a mulching mower** to recycle your lawn clippings and reduce your lawn's requirement for fertilizer.
- 6. Dispose of garden chemicals properly.** Never sweep, hose off, or pour leftover pesticides or fertilizers into drains or gutters. Dispose of unused products at your local hazardous waste site.



Keep Water in your Garden and out of the Gutter

- 7. Manage your watering system** so water does not run off your landscape onto hard surfaces and into gutters.
- 8. Reduce runoff** by using mulches in beds and permeable materials for walkways and driveways. Aerate and add organic matter such as compost to heavy or compacted soils. Install terraces or other features on slopes to keep water on site.
- 9. Install equipment** such as drip irrigation, soaker hoses, “smart” irrigation controllers, and rotor heads that improve watering efficiency and distribution.
- 10. Choose water efficient plants and garden designs.** Be creative about reducing your landscape’s need for water.



– PROTECT YOUR WATER –

To eliminate runoff to storm drains and protect our creeks, rivers and the ocean, minimize the use of pesticides and follow proper use and disposal practices. Whenever possible, use non-chemical alternatives or less toxic pesticide products.



Learn more by contacting the **Sacramento UC Master Gardeners** at (916) 875-6913, Monday–Friday, 9 am to noon and 1–4 pm. For other pest information, visit the UC IPM web site at www.ipm.ucdavis.edu.



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