You Can Help Protect Our Lakes With Simple Choices At Home

Best Management Practices (BMPs)

There are many Best Management Practices (or BMPs) that you can apply at home. These simple actions can help protect our water resources. ***Even if you don't live on a lake, your daily choices can make a real difference****. Following are just a few examples of good BMPs.*

GREEN UP
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1. Keep Grass Clippings, Leaves, and Other Yard Waste Out of the Streets and Storm Drains

Grass clippings, leaf litter, and other yard waste are major yet often overlooked sources of pollution. If allowed to enter the storm drains, these can lead to clogging and street flooding, and as they decay, the excess nutrients pass into our streams and lakes, contributing to poor water quality. Rather than letting it get into streets and storm drains, keep yard waste at home and put it to work for you instead through recycling or composting, or dispose of it properly by having it picked up on your yard waste day.

2. Water Efficiently and Only When Needed

A yard that thrives mainly on rainfall once plants are established conserves Florida's precious water resources and saves money on your water bill. A few tips to conserve water are 1) Group plants with similar water needs together, 2) Water your lawn and plants only when they show signs of stress. Let your plants tell you when they need water, 3) Put a rain gauge in your yard to track rainfall and avoid unnecessary watering, 4) Use rain sensors and have a soil moisture sensor or other smart irrigation technology connected to your irrigation system, and 5) Mow lawns high to encourage a deeper, more drought- and pest-tolerant root system.

3. Use Fertilizer, Pesticides, & Herbicides Appropriately & Only When Needed

Using fertilizer appropriately reduces potential pest problems and maintenance requirements. Unnecessary fertilizer can burn root systems, make plants more susceptible to pests, and severely pollute our water supply. Managing insects, diseases, weeds, and other pests using Integrated Pest Management (IPM) methods allows you to reach optimum health in your landscape and minimizes the risk of pesticide contamination in your yard and in our water supply. Find out more about fertilizer and IPM at ***casselberry.org/lakes****.*

To find out more about these and other Best Management Practices to help protect our lakes and water resources, visit casselberry.org/lakes

4. Dispose of Household Hazardous Waste Appropriately

Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) includes many common products such as paints, solvents, insecticides, batteries, fluorescent lights, and much more. Improper disposal of these items can lead to health hazards and damage to our water resources. Disposal of HHW is free of charge for the residential households of Seminole County. HHW items are not picked up at curbside and require special handling and disposal. HHW is accepted FREE OF CHARGE at all times during regular business hours at the Seminole County Central Transfer Station. In addition, free Tire Collection Events are held several times a year at the Central Transfer Station and Seminole County Landfill—proper disposal of tires helps reduce pollution and mosquito breeding.

5. Choose the Right Plant for the Right Place

Choosing low maintenance plants and planting them in areas that already have the light, soil, and water conditions they require conserves water, reduces the amount of chemicals near your home and in our threatened waterways, and saves time and money by having healthier plants that need less fertilizer, pesticides, water, and pruning.

6. Reduce Runoff—Plant a Rain Garden or Use Rain Barrels

Stormwater runoff can contribute to flooding and water quality problems as it carries excess nutrients and other pollutants to our lake systems. However, stormwater runoff can also be a useful resource if managed well. Rain gardens and rain barrels are two ways to intercept runoff at your home and use it for your landscape needs. With careful planning and plant selection, you can conserve water and save money while also helping protect our lakes and streams. Be sure to visit Lake Concord Park's demonstration rain barrel and rain garden installations, which can help inspire your own project at home.

7. Clean Up After Pets & Avoid Feeding Wildlife

*Please **pick up** after pets, even in yards at home, and dispose of the waste; otherwise, as it rains, this concentrated source of nutrients can leach into the lakes and cause harm. Even for properties not near a lake, runoff from pet waste can reach streets and storm sewers, which ultimately flow to our lakes. Also, water fowl can be a great example of natural wildlife, but feeding them can result in high concentrations of birds that our urban environment cannot support. Not only can this be harmful to our lakes, it can be harmful to the birds themselves by disrupting their natural, healthy diet and migratory patterns.*

8. Report Suspected Illegal Dumping, Improper Disposal, and Illicit Discharges

*You can use the **Seminole County Watershed Atlas** website to report discharges or dumping into lakes, streams, rivers, canals, ditches, stormwater ponds, or even into a manhole, storm drain or curb inlet in the street. You can also use it to report apparent water pollution events and other environmental issues such as algal blooms and fish kills. The Atlas also provides useful information about many of the lakes throughout Seminole County. You can find a link to the Watershed Atlas at **casselberry.org/lakes**.*