



Watershed Protection Tips for Gardeners

The Watershed Should Only Shed Water

The storm drain system is a vast network of gutters, pipes and open channels designed for flood control, which directs runoff – untreated – from the watershed straight into the waterways.

Polluted stormwater contaminates streams, rivers and lakes. It can kill or damage plants, fish and wildlife, and can degrade the quality of our water.

The Ventura County Community for a Clean Watershed program was established to protect Ventura County's watershed by preventing stormwater pollution.

For more information on how to keep our watersheds clean, go to cleanwatershed.org.



How Can You Help Keep the Watershed Clean?

Whether your home is one mile or many miles from the Pacific Ocean, what starts in your garden can end up as toxic stormwater runoff and contribute to coastal pollution.

You can do the right thing and keep preventable pollutants out of the storm drain system. Unlike sewer systems, storm drain systems direct runoff, untreated, straight into local waterways.

Preventable pollutants include both seen and unseen materials that accumulate in our yards, driveways, gutters and streets and that damage our watersheds.

Simple changes in the way we care for our gardens can make a big difference in keeping our watersheds clean.



What Is Our Watershed?

Our watershed is the total land area, including your yard, from which stormwater drains into streams, rivers or other bodies of water. In Ventura County our primary watersheds drain into the Ventura and Santa Clara Rivers, Malibu and Calleguas Creeks and the marinas and estuaries that flow into the Pacific Ocean.



Clean Gardening Practices

Plant Selection



Select pest-resistant and drought-resistant native plants for your garden to reduce the need for pesticides, fertilizers and water. Create landscaped areas next to

sidewalks and driveways to naturally collect and filter any potentially polluted runoff from paved surfaces. Go to bewaterwise.com and www.ventura-countygardening.com for a California-Friendly Gardening Guide.

Irrigation

Save water and money by automating your sprinkler system. Irrigate after dusk or early in the morning when less water is lost to wind and evaporation. Even during the hot summer months, there is no need to water every day. Routinely fix leaks and damaged sprinkler heads to minimize runoff that carries pollutants into the



storm drain system. Contact your local water supplier for irrigation efficiency tips and available rebates.

Fertilizers & Pesticides



Overuse of any pesticide or fertilizer is a key contributor to stormwater pollution. Apply only as needed and as directed on the label, and always store under cover, out of the rain. Never

use fertilizers or pesticides around water, drains, bare ground or if rain is predicted within 24 hours. Avoid using copper sulfate root killing products. Pesticides that contain diazinon or chlorpyrifos have been banned and should be disposed of at your local Household Hazardous Waste* collection center or event.



Integrated Pest Management (IPM)

IPM is an eco-friendly approach to effective pest management. Its goal is to use less-toxic methods to reduce the use of pesticides, creating a system that is safe for your family and the environment. To learn more, go to the UC Davis IPM resource site at ipm.ucdavis.edu.

Maintenance

Clear, remove and recycle yard debris such as leaves and grass cuttings by placing them in your yard waste bin or by composting. Even organic waste, when flushed or blown into storm drains, can create flooding and pollute the watershed. Rotting plant material can also reduce the oxygen available for aquatic wildlife and increase the presence of harmful bacteria.



*Contact your local city government to request information on the next Household Hazardous Waste collection event in your area.