



A Campaign of the Ochlockonee River Soil and Water Conservation District

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### **FACT SHEET**

- ◆ At least 50 percent of the water quality problems in the U.S. result from pointless personal pollution.
- ◆ Yard fertilizer runoff from residential areas is estimated to be responsible for one-third of the excess nitrogen (from fertilizers) polluting waterways.
- ◆ The first inch of runoff generally carries 90 percent of the pollution from a storm.
  - Storm drains carry runoff directly to bodies of water.
- ◆ A telephone survey was conducted with 832 randomly selected Tallahassee area residents to gauge awareness levels of water quality issues.
  - The majority of respondents felt they know only a little or a fair amount about water issues and 25 percent said they know practically nothing about water issues.
  - When asked what percentage they think runoff from yards and farms contributes to the pollution of local lakes and rivers, the average response was 38 percent.
  - The majority of the respondents felt they could make a difference by reducing the amount of water pollution coming from their own yard, while more than one-fourth (26.8 percent) felt it would not make a difference.

### **Common Sources of Pollution**

- ◆ Too much fertilizer applied to yards can cause an overgrowth of plant life in nearby lakes and streams when carried by stormwater runoff.
  - One-third of the survey respondents said they apply fertilizer to their yard, while 65 percent said they do not.
  - Our local soils naturally contain enough phosphorous to make it unnecessary to apply more to our yards and landscapes.
  - The survey found more than half of respondents do not use mulch in their yard or garden areas but 41 percent do.
  - Composting grass clippings can easily be used as mulch, which enriches and conditions soil.
  - Weed-choked waters make it difficult for fish and other aquatic life to survive due to reduced oxygen levels.

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Every drop you lose, nature finds. Slow The Flow.

[www.tappwater.org](http://www.tappwater.org)

## TAPP Facts 2

### **Common Sources of Pollution (cont.)**

- ◆ Washing one's car can contribute to personal pollution.
  - Wash cars on a grassy area if possible, to allow the water to percolate into the ground.
  - Pour soapy water down the sink, not into the street.
- ◆ Maintaining your car or truck at home can have damaging effects to stormwater runoff.
  - Check your vehicle for drips and oil leaks.
  - Place drip pans under the vehicle if leaks are found.
  - Never dump motor oil, antifreeze, transmission fluid or other engine fluids into gutters or on the ground.
  - Recycle used motor oil.
- ◆ Pests are a pain, but getting rid of them can be more of a nuisance if not done correctly.
  - Conduct quick research on the type of pests that may be infesting your home or lawn. This will help you choose the correct herbicide or pesticide.
  - Think about beneficial insects that may provide a natural alternative to pest-control problems.
  - Use non-chemical approaches to pest control, such as pruning off affected areas.
  - Use more environmentally friendly formulas like horticulture oils and insecticidal soaps.
- ◆ A septic tank should be pumped and inspected every 3 – 5 years.
  - When asked how often septic tanks should be inspected, 28 percent of survey respondents did not know.
- ◆ Properly functioning septic systems are important to maintain.
  - Make sure to choose the proper site, design and installation necessary for your home's needs.
  - Avoid compacting the soil to keep from crushing the pipes. Keep heavy items off the septic field.
  - Do not plant trees near the septic system, as the roots can damage pipes.
  - Proper septic management requires the system to be inspected and emptied every three to five years.

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