For a healthy, beautiful yard with minimum effects on water quality, consider these ideas:

Proper mowing at 3-4 inches high (or the highest setting on your mower) results in 80% fewer weeds and thicker turf that doesn’t require chemical inputs. Mowing height is one of the biggest factors in creating a healthy lawn. When grass is cut tall, it conserves moisture and minimizes weed seed germination.

Consider having a “good enough” lawn... when making lawn care decisions. It doesn’t have to look perfect to be healthy and meet the needs of your family.

Did you know....

- A watershed-friendly lawn care demonstration site is located at Hickem Cabin in Rock Bridge State Park (upper parking lot).
- Shelter Gardens uses environmentally friendly lawn care practices on its turf and gardens.
- Even the White House lawn is “going green.” Staff there are using gardening and landscaping practices designed to protect the environment and minimize polluted runoff.
- Some golf courses are changing their approach to stormwater. MU’s A.L. Gustin golf course has been certified by Audubon International as watershed-friendly for their efforts to improve water quality, use native plants and reduce chemical use.

Use mole traps or borrow a good dog for mole control. Using insecticide for grubs is totally ineffective for mole control.

Don’t bag your grass clippings. They can contribute much of the nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium your lawn needs.

Clover is your yard’s friend! Instead of treating to prevent it, think of clover as free fertilizer. Clover takes nitrogen from the air and feeds your soil! It can provide up to 30% of a lawn’s yearly nitrogen requirement.

What Does My Yard Have to do With Healthy Streams?

- If lawns were classified as a crop, it would rank as the fifth-largest in the country, based on area.
- Homeowners use ten times more chemicals per acre on lawns than farmers use on crops.
- 67,000,000 lbs. of synthetic pesticides are used on U.S. lawns.
- 30-60% of urban fresh water is used for watering lawns.*


Show-Me Yards and Neighborhoods... for healthy streams!

Green Lawns / Blue Waters

Having Both the Smart Way

The EPA now considers stormwater runoff from yards, streets, parking lots and other urban areas to be one of the most significant sources of contamination in our nation’s waters. Homeowners use more chemicals per acre on lawns than farmers use on crops. Some of these chemicals are finding their way to our streams.

All stormwater flows directly from gutters and storm drains straight to streams and is not treated in any way. This means our lawn and garden chemicals have the potential to cause fish kills and harm other living things.
What does a Show-Me Yard Look Like?
A Show-Me Yard can take any form-unique or traditional. In fact, you can create a Show-Me Yard simply by changing the way you take care of your yard.

With a Show-Me Yard You Win...
and so does Missouri’s environment. You don’t waste water, fertilizers or pesticides and Boone County’s streams, lakes and wildlife are protected for generations to come.

For More Information
or To become a Show-Me Yard,
Email scott.hamilton@mdc.mo.gov
or call 882-9909, Ext. 3257
Register to attend a Spring or Fall workshop by email or phone (above)

In the meantime, consider these easy changes to how you care for your yard:
1. Mow high...typically 3 to 4 inches or highest setting.
2. Remember: storm drains lead straight to streams.
3. Clover is okay; it provides nitrogen to your lawn.
4. Increase the amount of your yard in tree cover.
5. Sharpen mower blade (at least once per summer)
6. Compost grass clippings and/or leaf litter at home.
7. Check streets & sidewalks after applying lawn products; sweep excess into lawn, not the street.
8. Include native plants. They tolerate drought and require no fertilizers or extra watering.
9. Mulch circles beneath trees and around beds.
10. Install a rain barrel (www.rainbarrelguide.com)
11. Install a rain garden (www.raingardens.org)
12. Clean up pet waste
13. Leave clippings on lawn. They provide nutrients.
15. Map and measure your yard to determine correct application amounts (one adult pace = about 3 feet).
16. Attend a Show-Me Yards workshop (Sept 2005)
17. Have a soil test done, then apply fertilizer per recommendations. Call Boone County Extension office at 445-9792 for details.
18. Use a rain gauge or small tin can to track rainfall and avoid unnecessary over-watering.
19. Reduce use of lawn chemicals and apply according to directions.
20. Identify weeds, diseases or insects before taking action. Contact Boone County Extension for assistance.
21. Overseed bare spots in early spring or early fall.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:
Hinkson Creek www.helpethehinkson.org
Love Your Lawn www.kentuckypride.com/weathermatters/lawn.htm
City of Columbia www.gocolumbiamo.com (GoStormwater)
U of Missouri http://muextension.missouri.edu/explore/agguides/hort/
Hinkson Creek Watershed Restoration Project www.rainbarrelguide.com
Mid-America Green Industry Council www.raingardens.org
Boone County Extension www.gocolumbiamo.com
Missouri Department of Natural Resources http://muextension.missouri.edu/explore/agguides/hort/index.htm
Florida Yards & Neighborhoods http://hort.ufl.edu/fyn/
Carolina Yards & Neighborhoods www.clemson.edu/cyn/nine.html
Grow Native! www.grownative.org
Natural Yard Care www.metrokc.gov/dnrp/swd/naturalyardcare/lawncare.asp
Ask the Hotline...if you have lawn or garden questions, call the Boone County Extension Office at 573-445-9792