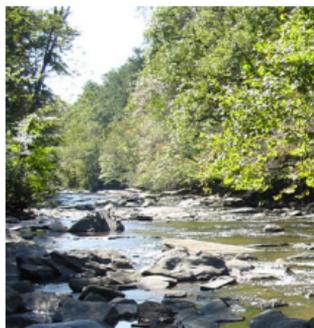


A Healthy Environment Starts at Home

tips for reducing our use of household hazardous products

Household hazardous products are products used around the house that contain chemicals that are hazardous to human and animal health or to the environment. Examples include cleaners, motor products, paints and yard chemicals.



These products should not be poured down drains or on the ground, nor should they be thrown in the garbage. Many of these products can end up in our watersheds through improper disposal, and can cause significant problems in stream ecosystems. Over time, heavy metals and pesticides can accumulate in aquatic organisms affecting their health and reproductive capabilities.

In The Yard



Many pesticides are toxic to people, animals, birds and beneficial insects, not just the pests that you buy them for. Pesticides may pollute nearby streams and lakes, and even end up in drinking water. Integrated Pest Management (IPM) techniques can reduce the need for pesticides:

- Make sure your garden has good soil and drainage to prevent weak plants that are prone to attack by insects and disease.
- Buy pest resistant plants that are hardy for your area. Plants that are adapted to our ecological conditions will be stronger and more disease resistant.
- Add mulch around your plants to help in preventing pests. If you still have undesired insects, there are alternative pest control methods that do not utilize harmful chemicals.

Another pollutant that causes problems in ecosystems is yard waste dumped down storm drains. These extra nutrients can overload a normal system, causing an abundance of algae to grow and then die. This process, called eutrophication, consumes oxygen in the water and negatively impacts the other organisms living in the stream. Yard clippings should always be composted or bagged and sent to a vegetative waste collection center.

Home Improvement

Many of the products we use around the house, such as furniture polish, paint, insecticides, and carpet cleaner, contain toxic chemicals that are often rinsed down the drain. Products used outdoors may also pollute rivers, streams, and groundwater. It is important to dispose of the products properly. Paints can be disposed of by mixing in sawdust or cat litter, letting the paint dry, then throwing it in the trash. Nothing should be poured down the storm drain.



This will contaminate the water that runs through our watershed. Many cleaners and products have less toxic alternatives, and some can even be homemade using ingredients in your pantry.

Car Care

Did you know that one pint of oil can produce a one acre slick on a body of water? Motor oil leaked or poured into stormdrains ends up in local streams as well as larger rivers such as Chattahoochee and Etowah, where it kills aquatic life. To reduce the impact of cars on our stream systems, owners should maintain their cars properly, always fixing broken parts and leakages.

- Use antifreeze that contains propylene glycol, which is less toxic than ethylene glycol.
- Car fluids should never be poured down the drain. Instead, take them to your local automotive shop or car dealer.
- Car batteries contain strong acid and should never be thrown away. These are recyclable and can be returned to the store where they were purchased.



For a complete guide to Household Hazardous Products, go to www.cobbstreams.org

Watershed Stewardship Program

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