

Town/Village of Harrison  
Stormwater Management Quarterly – Volume 6

***LEAVES – AN UNEXPECTED  
SOURCE OF POLLUTION***

The distance between your yard and the water's edge is as close as the nearest storm drain. An easy way to keep our waterways clean is to prevent leaves and other yard waste from entering storm drains.

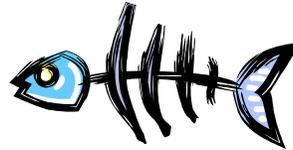


In wooded areas and grassy fields, rainwater and melting snow seep into the ground and leaves decompose where they fall, but in urban areas, paved surfaces prevent stormwater from permeating into the ground. Stormwater will run over these paved or "impervious" surfaces, picking up pollutants and leaves on its journey to the nearest waterway.



In autumn, rains can carry leaves into our storm drains. These leaves decompose, releasing nitrogen and

phosphorus into our waterways. These nutrients can discolor the water, cause unpleasant odors and algae blooms which can kill fish and other aquatic life.



***WHAT CAN I DO?***

Unfortunately, no matter how hard we try, some leaves and other yard waste will still make its way into our waterways. The key is to do our part to prevent an excess of organic material from entering our storm drains.



***SOME SIMPLE STEPS...***

can help keep organic waste out of our waterways.

*Compost:* Adding organic waste to your compost pile creates an inexpensive and nutrient rich fertilizer for your gardens.

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*Mulch:* Use your mulching mower to chop leaves into very small pieces which will decompose directly into your lawn. If you don't have a mulching mower, attachments can be purchased at most home centers.

*Rake:* Rake your leaves and place them in biodegradable brown bags for collection by town forces. Get the kids involved too. Nothing says autumn like a big pile of fluffy leaves to jump in.



Avoid raking or blowing leaves into the street where they can clog storm drains and create safety hazards for pedestrians and motorists.

***ONE MORE THING***

Not only does organic waste pose a hazard to our waterways, it can present a flooding hazard as well. Keeping our storm drains free of excess organic material will also help lessen the possibility of flooding. If the storm drain in front of your house is covered with debris, carefully clean off the grate, avoiding roadway traffic and hazards. Never reach inside the basin or try to remove the protective cover.

If the debris is not easily accessible, contact the Department of Public Works to report the condition and a representative will be sent to clear the drain.

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