YARD WASTE AND WATER POLLUTION

DID YOU KNOW

- **Yard debris is a significant source of local water pollution.** This includes leaves, shrubbery trimmings, grass clippings, twigs, branches, and mulch.
- Leaves and grass clippings contain a natural fertilizers called **phosphorous** and **nitrogen**. When the leaves fall, they quickly decompose and rain washes the natural fertilizers out of them. **When left on your lawn, these fertilizers are recycled back into the soil, helping plants grow into the spring.**
- When washed down storm drains and into streams and ponds, the **phosphorous and nitrogen** encourage growth of pond weeds and algae that **can interfere with recreation**, **reduce the amount of oxygen in the water** needed to sustain fish and aquatic life, **and contribute to the growth of cyanobacteria "blooms"** which can be toxic to people and animals.
- **Do not put yard debris in a riparian buffer, a protected area extending 50 to 150 feet from ponds and streams.** To find out more information about nearby buffers, contact the Stormwater Office at 919-969-RAIN (7246).
- **Yard debris often clog culverts, storm drains, and pipes, causing localized flooding.**

MANAGING WATER POLLUTION IN YOUR YARD

Do not pile leaves and other yard waste near streams, ponds, gutters, or drainage channels where they can blow or wash into creeks or ponds. The Town offers curbside pickup of yard waste, see below for details.

Recycle grass clippings, loose leaves, and their nutrients on your lawn. Take advantage of that free fertilizer.

Compost leaves and grass clippings along with yard waste. Select a location removed from streams, ponds, and wetlands.

Do not blow leaves or grass clippings off your property into streets, gutters, streams, ponds, buffers or drainage swales. Place them behind the curb and away from storm drains.

CHAPEL HILL STORMWATER

townofchapelhill.org/preventwaterpollution

stormwater@townofchapelhill.org

919-969-RAIN (7246)

YARD WASTE SERVICES

The Town offers curbside pickup of yard waste.

Learn more at townofchapelhill.org/trash

Writing Credit: Hamilton County Public Health and the Neoponset Stormwater Partnership