

# Remember, you're not just getting rid of weeds and pests

Our Water. Our Future.



## Choose earth-friendly landscaping

Did you know you can protect your kids, pets, and the environment from the harmful effects of herbicides and pesticides by choosing earth-friendly landscaping?

The chemicals in herbicides and pesticides pollute our waterways if washed from our lawns and gardens into storm drains and roadside ditches. Remember, storm drains lead directly to our lakes and rivers.

What can you do? Follow the tips on the back of this card for simple ways you can care for your lawn and garden and help keep our water clean.

# Choose earth-friendly landscaping

**Go native.** Select plants native to Michigan. Native plants are better able to tolerate Michigan's climate, require less fertilizer and water, and are more disease resistant.

**Variety is the spice of life.** Use a wide variety of plants to help control pests and minimize the need for pesticides.

**Water wisely.** Lawns need about one inch of water per week. Use a rain gauge and water only when necessary, instead of on a fixed schedule.



**Use mulch.** Place a thick layer of mulch (e.g., 4 inches) around trees and plants. This helps retain water, reduce weeds, and minimizes the need for pesticides.

**Mow high.** Make your lawn cheaper and easier to maintain by mowing

high—3 inches is the rule! Tall grass promotes root growth and shades out weeds. Let grass clippings fall back on the lawn. Clippings recycle nutrients back into the soil, so fertilizer needs can be reduced by 25% or more!

**Rake it or leave it.** Follow your community's leaf pick-up guidelines. Avoid raking leaves into storm drains or roadside ditches. Try mowing leaves into your lawn—they also make a good fertilizer!

**Use less for pests.** Use pesticides and herbicides sparingly. Limit application of these chemicals to problem areas only.

Find out more at [www.semco.org](http://www.semco.org)

Brought to you by the Southeast Michigan  
Partners for Clean Water

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