

# Happy Spring Cleaning

Before you get your rubber gloves and garden shears out, we need to talk about how to safely welcome in the spring season. It is the perfect time to pay extra attention to your yard, but chemicals like fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides can be harmful to the watershed. These chemicals can threaten our aquatic life and drinking water if they aren't used or stored properly. Help keep Yakima County's water happy and healthy with the helpful tips below!



**DO IT YOURSELF:** You can use some household ingredients for pest control and fertilizer. For example: crushed egg shells provide nutrients to the soil, while also deterring pests with their sharp edges. Banana peels, rice, and other food scraps soaked in water are environmentally safe fertilizers for the garden.

**PURCHASING:** Look for pesticides with low water solubility and high adsorption (the ability to bind to soil and plant surfaces) so that they are less likely to contaminate water bodies. Only purchase the amount of chemicals you will use during each season. Buy containerized baits for exterior treatment of pests instead of a spray to prevent runoff.



**APPLICATION:** Do not apply chemicals to hard surfaces, this makes it easy for stormwater to carry them into storm drains. Do not apply if it is windy or within 24 hours of expected rain/irrigation, as this increases chance of runoff. Do not apply chemicals near open water or storm drains. Use these chemicals sparingly!

**STORAGE:** Store all chemicals in a safe place, away from water sources, pets, and children so they aren't accidentally spilled or consumed. Chemicals should be accurately labeled in sealed containers. If you need to get rid of old chemicals, dispose properly at the Household and Small Business Waste Facility at the Terrace Heights Landfill (it's free!). Call 509-574-2472 for more information.



**Yakima County Regional  
Stormwater Management  
Group**