

Lynnhaven-Friendly Gardening Tips

As the temperatures warm and blossoms erupt, who can resist the call of nature? As you are planting and pruning, mowing and weeding, keep these environmentally friendly tips in mind. We can have beautiful yards and a clean river. When the storm drain whisks away the rain, help us to keep the Lynnhaven River free of harmful nutrients, pesticides and herbicides by following these best management practices.

- ☘ **Have a soil test done** through your local extension office before adding any chemicals to your lawn. If you choose to augment your lawn with any growth-enhancing compounds, make sure that you pick a brand that complements your soil and turf type.

Remember: Anything that you put down that is not used up by your lawn washes directly into the river through your storm drain. One source estimates that 65% of the fertilizer put on each yard will end up in runoff which moves directly into our water systems.

- ☘ **Grow a Freedom Lawn!** Fight the urge to grow a perfectly-managed, chemically-supported lawn and let nature take over.

Remember: Healthy ecosystems have diversity in species so don't fret when a few summer annuals creep into your lawn.

- ☘ **Raise your mower blade and keep it sharp!** Keeping your blade sharpened will improve the efficiency of your mower and improve the health of your grasses. Consistently mowing your lawn at a height of 3 inches or higher improves the health of your lawn and allows your lawn to capture more rain water.

Remember: The more water that stays on your lawn, the less runoff received by the Lynnhaven River!

- ☘ **Leave your grass clippings on your lawn.** These do not cause your lawn to thatch.

Remember: Mulching your grass clippings back into your lawn creates a natural fertilizer.

- ☘ **Keep your mowing to a minimum by planting more beds of native plants.** This reduces the area you have to mow which in turn reduces emissions from your mower.

Remember: Native plants offer habitat and are better suited for growing in our region, reducing the amount of water and care needed to keep them beautiful and productive.



PHOTO BY: MARY REID BARROW

🌿 **Install a Rain Barrel!** Rain barrels reduce the amount of runoff from your property and capture rain water for you to use at a later time. This water is free and untreated so your plants will flourish without the infusion of chemicals found in tap water.

Remember: You can order a Rain Barrel through Lynnhaven River NOW. For more details, please visit www.lynnhavenrivernow.org.

🌿 **Plant a Rain Garden!** Rain Gardens capture rain water on your property and slowly release it into the ground water system instead of it washing quickly into the storm water system. Get more information by visiting our website at www.lynnhavenrivernow.org.

Remember: The more water you can keep on your property, the less runoff to cloud and pollute the Lynnhaven River.

🌿 **Sweep all chemicals and clippings from impervious surfaces and keep storm drains free of debris.**

Remember: Anything that is on a driveway, sidewalk, or in a storm water gutter during a rain event will end up in the storm drain and will outfall into the river.

🌿 **Use a natural insect spray** instead of harmful chemicals. A mild solution of dish soap and water acts as an effective means of controlling insects on many plants. Be sure to protect the health of delicate plants by testing their tolerance to the soap and water solution before using it to cover a large area of a plant.

Remember: The fewer toxins we use on our property, the fewer toxins that are available to enter our waterways.



Do you have a professional lawn care service or landscaping professional caring for your property? Check our website at www.lynnhavenrivernow.org or contact our office for a list of Lawn Care and Landscaping Providers who have completed one of our training programs and offer Lynnhaven-friendly lawn care and landscape programs.



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1608 PLEASURE HOUSE ROAD SUITE 108.
VIRGINIA BEACH VA 23455 • 757-962-5398