

Lawn Care for Lake Care - 10 Easy Fall Clean-up Tips

1. Follow label instructions on winterizers and other fertilizer and pesticide products:



Fall is a great time to control weeds for next summer, and ensure your lawn continues to grow through the winter months. Under that blanket of snow your grass slowly sets deeper roots throughout the winter. These roots hold soil better and draw moisture from deeper in the soil to reduce the amount of watering your lawn may need. Deeper roots also allow the soil to absorb more rainfall; instead of allowing runoff. The key is to not over-fertilize. For most of our lawns, the small bag is enough for a full fall application. Extra fertilizer just ends up in the lakes. Follow label instructions closely, and don't forget cleanup!

2. Aerate:

Aerating your lawn helps your grass set stronger roots by ensuring the roots don't suffocate. Additionally, the holes you poke help draw water deeper into the topsoil so that it can absorb more rainfall and keep runoff from ending up in the lake. When done just prior to ground-freeze, aeration and frost action are a great one-two punch to help break up the hardpan that develops in the top few inches of soil that prevents percolation, or deep absorption of rainfall. Aeration will also lead to a greener, more drought-resistant stand of grass.



3. Rake leaves and shred, compost, or bag:



Leaves from small ornamental or shrub trees may be OK to shred and mulch as you mow. With aeration, in-place composting will help break down the clay soils and help absorption even more. If you have larger trees and need to rake, please rake away from the street. Mound does not provide leaf clean-up, so any leaves you place on the street will likely end up in our storm drains and then the lake. Shred, compost, or bag them for proper disposal. If you do not compost, leaves can be dropped at The Mulch Store in Minnetrista just East of C.R. 92 and MN 7. This service is free of charge if you are a Mound resident.

4. Select a composting area carefully:

The city has many minimally maintained lots that are a part of our storm water treatment system. They slow water delivery to the lake and allow more of the rainwater to absorb into the soil instead of going to the lake. These natural areas filter organic particles out of the storm water and the plants in these lots consume the nutrients in the water before it reaches the lake. Adding organic loading and organic particles to these areas by composting on these city lots defeats all of these benefits; and can look messy. Please do not compost or dump lawn clippings or debris on city lots, natural swales, or watercourses that pick up storm water - higher ground is best.



5. Direct mowing discharge and raking away from the street:



Discharging grass clippings onto the street allows organic material to wash into our storm drains. It would be absurd to think of someone dumping their grass catcher directly into the lake, but blade-by-blade we have the same effect if we discharge grass clippings onto the street; or don't clean them up when we're done. The storm drains link the street directly to the lake. In fall, leaves greatly increase this risk. Raking leaves onto the street disrupts the city's sweeping efforts by clogging the sweeper and increasing haulage, dump cycles, and dump fees. As a reminder, Mound does not provide leaf pick-up or collection services. If you are a Mound resident, leaves can be dropped at The Mulch Store in Minnetrista just East of C.R. 92 and MN 7 free of charge.

6. Leave room for the sweeper:



....not just room to get around or swing by on the centerline; but clear and continuous access to the curb line, gutters, and storm drain collection basins. Unlike snow removal typically done in the wee hours of the morning, and when parking is prohibited on the streets overnight, sweeping occurs during the business day when you may be out and about or at work. As you transition your boats and summer toys from the lake into winter storage, please help our crew get the season's debris off the streets by keeping the street free of vehicles and trailers.

7. Lend a hand - clean a drain if you see one that needs it:

City crews cannot be everywhere all the time and certainly are not able to canvass the full city after each rainstorm. So; if you see a drain that is covered over in leaves this fall, please lend a hand and gather those leaves, adding them to your own compost or bag clippings. Clogged drains contribute to localized flooding and may allow diversion of storm water away from the storm drains directly into the lake. Dumping any household, automotive, or other hazardous waste into the storm drain conveys it directly to the lake. Rain only, please!!!



8. Clean up after your pets:



Pet droppings left on the ground to wash away, or obliterated with a water blast from a garden hose instead of being picked up, end up in our storm drains and the lakes. Cleaning up after our pets at home, not just when in public places, is essential to keeping organics and bacteria that can pollute our lakes away from the storm water. There are many options to alleviate this problem. These include bagging pet waste for your household trash, composting, or installing a carefully-located, in-ground digester. Always be considerate of your neighbors when disposing of pet waste and be certain you have complied with your trash-hauler requirements, and haven't created a pathway to the lake.

9. Plant a tree:

Despite all the talk about our leaves and careful clean-up of them, trees are the workhorses of clean water initiatives. When well-placed and selected for the conditions of the site, they do it all. Not only do their roots hold the soil in place, they also help keep it loose and absorbent. Trees draw water out of the soil to evaporation so that the ground can absorb more water - all keeping dirt and water out of the lake. Much of our community is already wooded, but if you have room for a tree, consider adding one to your family.



10. Read up about your watershed:



There are lots of public and private activities working hard to improve the quality of our lakes, rivers, and streams for aesthetic, recreational, economic, and ecological purposes. Take a moment to get familiar with them, their technical expertise, and the services and resources they may offer to help you take better care of the lake right from your home.

www.minnehahacreek.org

www.cleanwatermn.org

www.freshwater.org

www.dnr.state.mn.us/backyard/index.html

www.hennepin.us/residents#environment

MINNEHAHA CREEK
WATERSHED DISTRICT