

# What Is A Watershed?

A watershed is like a funnel that collects run-off from surrounding areas and drains into a lake. Nearly everything that runs off yards in the watershed — leaves, grass clippings, fertilizers and soil — travels through the streets and storm sewers and into a lake. A lake like Lake Harriet.

The Lake Harriet watershed extends for miles from the lakeshore. In fact, run-off from as far away as 53rd and France ends up in the lake.

In other words, you don't have to live next to Lake Harriet to have an effect on Lake Harriet.

## FROM YOUR YARD TO THE STREET.

While normal lawn watering or rainfall is beneficial, intense rain or excessive irrigation creates run-off which carries fertilizer, pesticides, soil, leaves, grass clippings, and other debris into streets and storm drains and into Lake Harriet.

That's why a healthy yard is the first step toward a healthy lake.

Maintaining a healthy landscape will help prevent run-off. Seed bare spots on your yard to prevent soil erosion. Point drainspouts away from foundations and paved surfaces and onto your yard.

Before you apply fertilizers and pesticides to your lawn, always read the label directions. Never pour leftover fertilizer and pesticides down storm drains, and clean up spills immediately. Also, keep leaves and grass clippings off paved sur-

faces. Nutrients from these organic materials damage Lake Harriet. Bag your leaves for collection. Or better yet, compost or mulch them. Grass

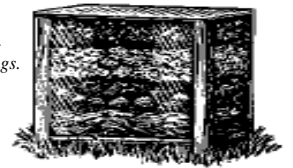
clippings can be safely left on your lawn. In fact, the nutrients that can harm a lake are beneficial to a lawn.

## FROM THE STREET TO LAKE HARRIET.

Because our neighborhoods have many paved areas, nature's ability to filter harmful items before they reach the lake is greatly reduced. Streets, driveways and sidewalks provide a direct route to Lake Harriet. When leaves or grass clippings are left in the street, they are easily washed into storm drains and directly into your lakes and ponds. Further, these organic materials begin to decay immediately. So even if the leaves or clippings don't make it to the lake, the nutrients they release as they decay will make it.

### Building a compost pile:

1. Start with a layer of twigs or small branches.
2. Add grass clippings, weeds or plant trimmings.
3. Add a layer of leaves, straw or dried plants.
4. Sprinkle on a thin layer of garden soil.
5. Repeat 2 through 4 until your bin is full.
6. Mix frequently.



These nutrients harm Lake Harriet by promoting the growth of excess algae. The algae form a scum on the water's surface that creates an unpleasant odor. But more importantly, the scum suffocates the lake. Aquatic plants don't get the sunlight they need and fish in turn don't get the oxygen they need to survive.

That's why it's important to remember that even if you don't live next to Lake Harriet, you live in the watershed. That means what you do can harm Lake Harriet. It also means what you do can help the lake. And a

few simple measures in maintaining a healthy yard will ensure a healthy Lake Harriet.

LAKE HARRIET WATERSHED  
AWARENESS PROJECT