

# How can gardening hurt the ocean?

**Remember, anything that is dumped into a storm drain or gutter, or discarded into a creek, ends up on our beaches without being treated!**

Caring for plants on property that is miles from the ocean may seem to have little to do with creek and ocean pollution, but activities involved in gardening can be very detrimental to water quality.

Normal garden maintenance often generates yard waste and chemical runoff that must be properly handled.

- Pesticides and fertilizers that reach creek or ocean water are harmful to aquatic life and can cause problems for people, and disrupt the delicate balance of wetlands.
- The nutrients from garden runoff fertilize aquatic plants; the plants grow at an unnaturally excessive rate, taking oxygen away from other aquatic life, which then dies.
- Yard waste and sediment washed down creeks can harm aquatic life by clogging the gills of fish, blocking sunlight, and raising water temperatures.
- Yard waste can also clog storm drains and cause flooding.

## Solutions...

### Pesticide Use

- Don't use pesticides during the rainy season as they may be carried by the next storm into the creeks or ocean. Better yet, reduce or eliminate the use of pesticides.
- When irrigating the landscaped areas, avoid over-watering, not only to conserve water but to avoid runoff of water, which may carry nutrients and pesticides to the creek or ocean directly from the storm drain.
- Store pesticides and application equipment properly, and dispose of the used containers and unused chemicals at a local hazardous waste facility.
- Anyone using pesticides should understand how to handle them properly.

### Yard Waste

- Compost the material for your own use or
- Properly dispose of yard waste in your green waste bin.

### Use toxic pesticides as a last resort.

First use **physical controls**. Hand-picking, traps, barriers, or a strong jet of water can reduce or thwart many pests, especially in the early stages of infestation.

### Biological Controls

Many beneficial insects and animals eat detrimental insects. Encourage the "good" ones to live near your property. Call the Community Environmental Council at 963-0583 for more information.

### Chemical Controls

Ask your pesticide supplier which are the least toxic options for your particular problem.

### Proper Disposal of Pesticides

Dispose of unused pesticides and empty containers at your local hazardous waste facility. Call the Community Environmental Council at 963-0583 for facility hours and hazardous waste information.



## Would you believe...?

### MYTH #1

**Runoff from streets and storm drains is treated at wastewater treatment plants.**

**FACT** Storm drain runoff in Santa Barbara County is not treated and goes directly into our creeks — what goes into the storm drain ends up at the beach. That is why it is important to insure that pollutants such as animal waste, automotive fluids, garbage and chemicals do not end up in storm drains.

### MYTH #2

**Most creek pollution comes from a few big polluters.**

**FACT** The well-known stories about environmental problems tend to focus on big, recognizable targets such as industrial factories, leaking toxic waste dumps, and oil spills. As a result, people often forget that the majority of water pollution comes from small sources — especially at the household level.

### MYTH #3

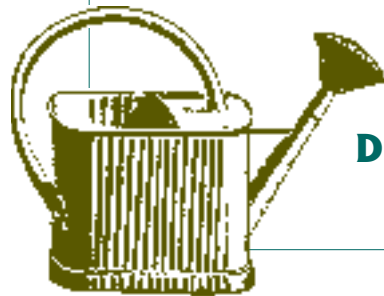
**The impact of one household doesn't really matter.**

**FACT** Although an individual home might contribute only minor amounts of pollution, the combined effect of an entire neighborhood or city is serious.

### MYTH #4

**Creek contamination and beach postings are usually caused by chemical pollution such as paints, solvents, and motor oils.**

**FACT** Chemical contamination is always a concern. Yet, bacterial contamination from animal waste, litter, leaking septic tanks, garbage, and green waste also threaten creeks, beaches, wildlife and your health. Beach postings are actually triggered by bacterial contamination.



**Dumping *anything* into a creek, gutter or storm drain is ILLEGAL**

# Want to know more?

Call **1-877-OUR-OCEAN** if you see

- illegal dumping
- pollution in a creek
- a clogged storm drain
- a pollutant spill near a gutter, storm drain or creek
- disposal of wastewater into a gutter or storm drain

## If you need to dispose of a pollutant:

- Used motor oil, call:  
Used Oil Hotline - 800-CLEANUP
- Hazardous waste, call:  
(Paint, paint thinner, garden chemicals, etc.)  
Community Environmental Council  
805-963-0583

## For more information on clean water programs

- City of Santa Barbara Creek Restoration & Water Quality Improvement Program:  
805-897-2658  
[www.ci.santa-barbara.ca.us](http://www.ci.santa-barbara.ca.us)
- Santa Barbara County Project Clean Water:  
805-568-3440  
[www.co.santa-barbara.ca.us/project\\_cleanwater](http://www.co.santa-barbara.ca.us/project_cleanwater)



PROJECT  
CLEAN WATER

# Gardener's Guide to Clean Water



Part of a unified community effort to clean up Santa Barbara County's creeks and beaches



PROJECT  
CLEAN WATER



## So what's the problem?

### Our ocean and creeks are polluted

Bacteria and other types of pollution have been found in local creeks and the ocean. Ongoing contamination of these waters has resulted in beach and creek closures, and unconfirmed reports of illness from contact with these polluted waters. Remember, everything that flows into a storm drain or creek ends up in the ocean without being treated.

### Our community is working to solve this problem

Project Clean Water is a coalition of nonprofit organizations, businesses, government agencies and concerned citizens. All of these groups have these goals: to improve water quality in our creeks and the ocean, to promote public health and to protect the quality of life in Santa Barbara County for everyone.

### You can help

By implementing the solutions in this pamphlet, you can take part in protecting and improving the water quality of local creeks and making our beaches safe again.

