

# Conservation News



Environmental News and Information from the City of Melbourne

Public Works & Utilities Department ~ Environmental Community Outreach Division

## New brochure explains stormwater pollution laws

Routine activities like fertilizing the grass, applying pesticides, over watering, and blowing lawn clippings into the street are a major source of stormwater pollution. Every time it rains, these contaminants are carried into the stormwater system, which leads directly to our waters including the Indian River Lagoon.

Lawn clippings blown onto paved surfaces create a huge problem. Besides clogging storm drains, which could lead to localized flooding, the clippings carry chemicals that contaminate the water. As the organic waste starts to decompose it absorbs dissolved oxygen in the water, which kills aquatic life.

To educate landscape maintenance companies about these issues, the City's Engineering Department has developed a brochure that it is sending to landscaping companies in Melbourne.

"The brochures will also be given to staff in various divisions and departments, including Code Enforcement, to pass out on the spot when they observe someone blowing grass into the street," said Marla Keehn, the City's Stormwa-

ter Regulatory Compliance Coordinator.

Keehn notes that the City passed an illicit discharge



ordinance in 2008 that prohibits illegal connections and polluted matter from purposely entering the storm drain system.

Polluted matter includes lawn clippings, leaves, branches, debris, pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, steam cleaning waste, degreasers, solvents, sewage, antifreeze and other automotive products.

The brochure describes 10 "best management practices" to follow. These include:

- 1. Dispose of yard debris properly** by keeping the debris out of gutters. Practice grasscycling by blowing grass clippings back onto the lawn where they will quickly decompose, returning valuable nutrients to the soil.
- 2. Apply fertilizers and pesticides according to the label and only when needed.** Slow-release organic fertilizers are less likely to enter

stormwater.

- 3. Mow grass to proper height** to maintain turf health and minimize pesticide and fertilizer use.

- 4. Aerate lawns** to improve water and nutrient uptake, reducing runoff.

- 5. Choose native and/or Florida friendly plants** that are drought tolerant and require less fertilizer and pesticides when developing your landscape.

- 6. Use organic mulch** to reduce water loss through

evaporation, prevent erosion, suppress weeds and improve the soil for plant growth.

- 7. Plant non-turf areas** where possible because lawns require more water and maintenance than wildflowers, shrubs and trees.

- 8. Use integrated pest management techniques** to prevent pest damage with the least risk of environmental damage.

- 9. Use low volume watering approaches** where possible. Make sure to set irrigation timers to comply with watering restrictions.

- 10. Adjust an irrigation system** when water falls or runs onto impervious surfaces such as streets, sidewalks and driveways.

You can view the brochure online at: [www.melbourneflorida.org](http://www.melbourneflorida.org) or call 321-608-7341.



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## Water: A Liquid Asset

In a world of sky-rocketing prices on everything from food to fuel, your tap water remains one of the best bargains around.

- Tap water provides safety and convenience.
- Less than 1% of the average person's total personal income is spent on water and wastewater services.
- An eight-ounce glass of water can be refilled approximately 15,000 times for the same price as a six-pack of soda.
- Your water bill pays for a lot more than simply water. You get sophisticated water treatment, frequent testing and monitoring, and a vast underground infrastructure that delivers safe, plentiful water right at your tap.
- Studies show that bottled water is no purer than tap water, yet bottled water costs about 1,900% more.
- American water utilities monitor for more than 100 contaminants and must meet close to 90 regulations for water safety and quality.
- Community water supplies are tested every day — far more frequent testing than for bottled water.

## A Little Comparative shopping ...

On average, a gallon of tap water in the United States costs a fraction of a penny. You simply can't find a better deal for a commodity that means so much to your daily life. Compare that with the cost of some other liquids you might use on a daily basis.



**ONE GALLON** of tap water = less than 1/10th of 1 cent



**ONE GALLON** of gasoline = \$2.49 - \$3.75

**ONE GALLON** of bottled water = \$1.43 - \$8.00



**ONE GALLON** of table wine = \$18.50 - \$37.95



**ONE GALLON** of soda = \$2.80 - \$4.60



**ONE GALLON** of cappuccino = \$35 - \$52

**ONE GALLON** of imported olive oil = \$135 - 525



**ONE GALLON** of milk = \$3.79 - \$4.24



**ONE GALLON** of fine French perfume = \$60,160

Based on 2010 US prices

## City Earns Keep Brevard Beautiful Trash Bash Award

Keep Brevard Beautiful (KBB) Executive Director Pat Brown presented Melbourne with an award for winning the Large City Category for the 2011 Trash Bash Competition. KBB sponsors this annual event. This is the second year in a row for the large city category win. Melbourne also won this Trash Bash award in 2007. Volunteers collected 6,401 pounds of litter during the Trash Bash event on April 16. Litter pickup totals for the month of April were included in the KBB cities completion, with work done by 326 volunteers collecting 34,721 pounds during the month.

The award was presented at the July 26 City Council meeting. Pictured from left to right are Pat Brown, Mayor Harry Goode, ECO Manager Jennifer Wilster, Environmental Programs Coordinator Jennifer Thompson, who coordinated the event, and Public Works & Utilities Director Ralph Reigelsperger.

