



Brandon Township Water Quality Initiative We All Can Do Our Part

What Water Quality Means to Brandon Township Residents

In Brandon Township, we enjoy our beautiful creeks and lakes. Everyone in the township gets their drinking water from a well. Every one of us wants our drinking water and the water in our lakes and streams to be clean.

Brandon Township is working with several other communities in North Oakland County to help property owners understand how they can do their part to maintain or improve the township's water quality. In Brandon Township, contaminants that are picked up by stormwater on its way to our lakes, creeks, and wetlands, and septic seepage are the major causes of water pollution.

As part of the township's water-quality Initiative, residents are asked to implement as many of the following 10 simple tips as possible on their property:

10 Simple Tips To Protect Water Quality in Brandon Township

1. Choose water-friendly fertilizers, or none at all. If your soil needs nutrients, use organic, slow-release, low-phosphorus fertilizers to reduce the amount of excess nutrients reaching our streams and lakes where they can cause harmful algae blooms. Your county MSU Extension Gardening Hotline (**248-858-0902**) in Oakland County can provide you with additional information about fertilizing and can assist you with soil testing to determine what nutrients your yard needs.

2. Minimize pesticide use. Correct watering, mowing, and fertilizing can reduce many pest problems. Only use pesticides as a last resort or consider an environmentally-friendly alternative such as diluting a few drops of dish soap in warm water and spraying it on the affected plants. For help identifying pest solutions, call the MSU Extension Gardening Hotline (**248-858-0902**).

3. Got Grass? Mow high! Taller grass means a healthier lawn. Set your mower blade to leave grass about three inches tall. Taller grass cools the soil, needs less watering, and causes the grass to have deeper roots. It also helps to shade out weeds. Use a mulching mower that leaves grass clippings on the lawn where they will literally feed your grass. Some areas may not need to be mowed at all. Reduce the size of your lawn to only what you need.

4. Got Yard & Kitchen Waste? Compost! Leaves, other yard waste, and kitchen scraps of all kinds (except dairy & meat products) can be composted to produce rich, organic mulch for your lawn and garden. Visit the Southeastern Oakland County Resource Recovery Authority (SOCRRA) website at www.socrra.org/lawn_and_garden.htm for more information about composting and other healthy lawn and garden tips.

5. Keep Your Car Healthy! Get your car tuned regularly, fix oil leaks, and don't dump any automotive wastes down storm drains – they lead straight to our waterways, and, ultimately, to the Great Lakes, which supply drinking water to many thousands of people.!

6. Properly dispose of household hazardous wastes. You know all those cleaning products, batteries, pesticides, paints, and thinners cluttering up your garage? You can take them to an authorized hazardous waste disposal facility to ensure that they are disposed of safely. Call your city or township to find out the next drop-off date and location near you.

7. Clean up after your pet. It may seem like a chore, but cleaning up your pet's waste helps keep harmful bacteria out of our waterways.

8. Plant a rain garden. Do you have an area in your yard where water naturally collects? Consider planting water-loving native species to help absorb that excess runoff. Visit www.raingardens.org to find out how – the beautiful solution to pollution!

9. Fight the aliens! Invasive plants such as purple loosestrife, garlic mustard, buckthorn, and autumn olive can take over our wetlands and forests, crowding out native species. Avoid planting these species, remove those that you find on your property, and replace them with native plants. Visit the Wild Ones website at www.for-wild.org or your local land conservancy (www.NOHLC.org or www.savingplaces.org) for more information.

10. Buffers are best! If your property abuts or includes a creek, a lake, or a pond, one of the most important things you can do to protect water quality is to provide a "buffer" at least 25 feet in width – (the wider the better) of natural vegetation such as prairie grasses, wildflowers, shrubs, and trees between your home and the water. Buffers planted with native species provide wonderful habitat for birds and other wildlife and prevent erosion by holding the streambank or lakeshore together with their deep roots. They absorb excess runoff and nutrients carried by storm water as it leaves your yard. An added benefit to providing a buffer zone on waterfront property is that it discourages the geese from fouling your lawn. Like a dock on a lake or a duck blind, any well-designed minor intrusion into a buffer area can create a lookout point to enhance your experience with nature while maintaining the integrity of the buffer. Contact the Flint River Watershed coalition (810)767-6490 owner-frwc@msue.msu.edu or the Clinton River Watershed Council at 248-601-0606 or contact@crwc.org for more information about establishing a buffer-zone on your property or enhancing your existing landscape.

* Logo developed by Southeast Council of Governments (SEMCOG)

For more information contact Brandon Township's Authorized Watershed Education Coordinators:
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