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Public Service Announcement

TOPIC: **Fall Lawn Care and Stormwater Runoff**

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Don't leave lawn care until spring! Fall is the best time of year to fertilize your lawn and control weeds. In fact, healthy lawns help area lakes and streams. Thick grass helps prevent soil erosion and absorbs rainwater. By soaking up rainwater, lawns can decrease the amount of stormwater runoff that funnels pollutants into drinking water supplies, lakes and streams.

Here's how to keep your lawn healthy in the fall:

1. **Mow:** Mow your grass at a height of two to three inches.
2. **Water:** Even though it is cooler in the fall, lawns still need regular watering to maintain plant health and survive winter conditions. Water until the ground begins to freeze.
3. **Fertilize:** Fall is the best time of year to fertilize your lawn, specifically around Labor Day and right after your last mowing. Apply just before it rains to help save water.
4. **Soil test:** A soil test is a good idea, especially when concerned about the acidity or nutrients.
5. **Control weeds:** Remove a limited number of weeds by hand or spot-treat with a herbicide.
6. **Sweep-up:** Sweep up and reuse lawn care products that fall on streets, sidewalks and driveways.

Here's how to recycle your yard waste:

1. **Compost:** Composting recycles nutrients and helps keep debris out of streets and stormdrains.
2. **Mulch:** You can use leaves, whole or shredded by a power mower, as winter or spring mulch spread two to three inches deep on top of shrubs and perennial beds.
3. **Bag:** If you must, rake and bag your leaves for pickup by your local municipality. Contact your local town or village regarding pick up procedures and times.

To learn more about backyard composting, soil testing and what you can do to prevent stormwater pollution contact Cornell Cooperative Extension at 845-429-7085. This message was brought to you by Cornell Cooperative Extension and the Stormwater Consortium of Rockland County.