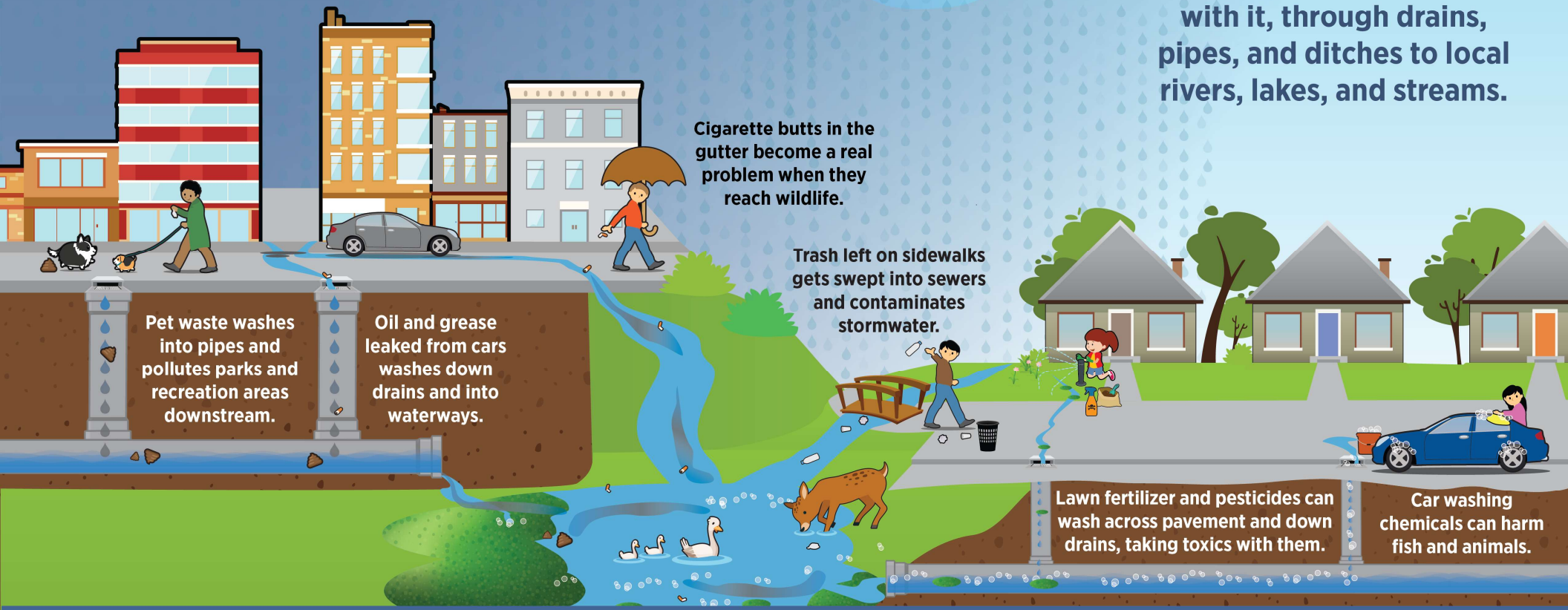
Stormwater: Where It **Flows,** Everything **Goes**

When it rains, snows, or sleets, water hits hard surfaces and takes anything on that surface with it, through drains, pipes, and ditches to local rivers, lakes, and streams.



Where Stormwater Flows, Everything Goes

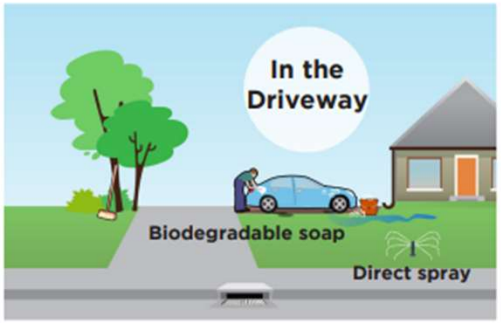
https://www.bethelparkpa.gov/

EPA

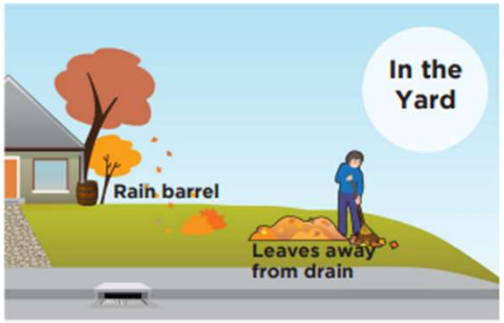
If you've been thinking about reducing your environmental footprint, you can take steps to decrease the amount of pollution that flows from your home into local waterways every time it rains. Known as stormwater, once rain or snow hits the ground, it can carry dirt, chemicals, and other pollutants downstream from your home and yard to the rivers and lakes in your community. Here are a just a few steps you can take to be stormwater smart at home:

Rain is great for your lawn, but excess rain can run off from your yard and walkways into the street, where it flows from the storm drain into local rivers, lakes, or streams, taking any chemical you've applied with it.

- Apply fertilizers and pesticides carefully on your lawn or garden and not on pavement.
- Avoid using fertilizers and pesticides completely if rain is in the forecast.
- Consider installing a rain garden, which is a depressed area planted with grasses or perennials that collects stormwater.



- Wash your car with biodegradable soap to avoid chemicals floating downstream, or visit a carwash.
- Direct water from downspouts and car washing to grassy areas, so it can soak into the ground rather than hit the pavement.
- Don't hose down your driveway and flush dirt down the storm drain.
- When watering your lawn, direct the spray toward your lawn and plants, not the pavement.
- Look for spots on the ground that indicate your car leaks oil or fluid. Don't let your leaks pollute!



- Use permeable pavers instead of hard stones or pavement in your yard to help water absorb into the ground.
- Don't rake leaves or yard clippings into the storm drain to avoid clogs and debris that could cause flooding.
- Install a rain barrel to help prevent rain from flowing into storm drains (and also save water for dry spells!).

- Pick up pet waste and keep trash and dirty water away from pavement and storm drains, where it can contaminate stormwater that flows downstream.
- During colder weather, avoid oversalting your sidewalks and use an appropriate amount of deicer—a little goes a long way.
- Sweep sidewalks and put the debris in the trash.

DID YOU KNOW?

If you use a rain barrel to collect water for plants, you can keep your landscape green for free. Every time it rains, you'll collect water that can be used later! Check out www.epa.gov/watersense for more tips to save water!