

Storm Drains vs. Sanitary Sewers

Storm drains are intended to collect and transport runoff from rainfall. Storm drain systems do not remove pollutants from water before discharging it into creeks, streams, or rivers. The storm drainage system includes all storm drains, streets, roadside gutter pans and ditches, drainage channels and swales, creeks and streams.

Sanitary Sewers collect wastewater from indoor plumbing such as toilets, sinks, mop sinks, and floor drains and take it to a sewage treatment facility. The treatment facility removes many harmful pollutants from wastewater before discharging it to the river.

REMEMBER, storm water is not treated and goes straight to water bodies — where we swim & fish!



Storm Water & Watersheds

When it rains, water hits the ground or a surface and infiltrates in to the ground or runs off the surface. In some cases, the water evaporates. Water that goes into the ground is typically known as ground water. Water that runs off the ground or a surface is known as storm water.

Storm water runoff occurs when rain hits an impervious surface (roof, driveway, paved road, parking lot, concrete pad, clay, etc...). Typically, storm water flows from a ridge line (highest point that separates two areas) to a collection point/area downstream. The area where rain falls and is collected is known as a watershed.

Mobile County contains sixteen (16) watersheds - Fowl River, Seabury Creek, Meekers Creek, Lower Dog River, Upper Dog River, Halls Mill Creek, Grand Bay, Gunnison Creek, Eightmile Creek, Bayou Sara, Three Mile Creek, Deer River, Lower Chasaw Creek, Big Creek-Hamilton Creek, Big Creek-Pierce Creek, and Middle Mobile Bay. The Mobile city limits intersect nine (9) watersheds - Muddy Creek, Bayou Sara, Chickasaw Creek, Dog River, Millers Creek, Mobile Bay, Mobile River, Pierce Creek and Three Mile Creek.

Composting and Mulching (Reducing Yard Debris)



Compost & Mulch

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Storm Water Management
Educational Series

Compost & Mulch

Compost is the material that results from the natural decomposition of organic matter. Compost can be mixed with garden soil before planting or used as a mulch.

Mulch is any material that is spread over soil to cover it. This material can be either organic or inorganic. Both materials can be purchased from retailers or easily prepared at home using everyday waste materials.

Benefits of Composting & Mulching

Composting:

- Improves the quality of soil.
- Improves the structure and texture of soil enabling it to better retain nutrients, moisture, and air, which plants need to grow.
- Reduces the need for water and fertilizers.
- Reduces the volume of waste material disposed of in our local landfill.

Mulching:

- Helps hold in moisture to keep plants from drying out.
- Inhibits the growth and germination of nutrient-stealing weeds.
- Keeps roots cool in the summer and protects them from freezing in the winter.

Compost Materials

The following materials can be used in the creation of a compost pile:

- Bread
- Coffee grounds and tea leaves
- Egg shells
- Fruits, vegetables and their peels
- Garden wastes
- Grass clippings
- Wood chips
- Leaves
- Shredded paper and newspaper
- Sawdust
- Sod

The following materials should never be used in the creation of a compost pile:

- Dog manure
- Cat manure or litter
- Cheese & other dairy products
- Chicken or fish
- Meat or bones
- Fat
- Noxious weeds
- Oils

Types of Mulch

The following are examples of organic mulches:

- Wood chips
- Grass clippings
- Leaves
- Pine needles and straw
- Hay

The following are examples of inorganic mulches:

- Stones
- Gravel
- Landscape fabric
- Plastic
- Newspaper

Composting Tips

Chop your materials into small pieces, which will break down faster. Always cover your layer of green material with a layer of brown material to cut down on flies and mask any odors. For fine compost, run over it with a mulching lawn mower. When composting whole plants remove seed heads and seed pods. Avoid adding roots of plants to your compost pile that could generate a whole new plant.