

TAKE THE BAIT

BEGIN PRACTICING WATER PROTECTION



Buckthorn



There are also many simple stewardship practices you can implement around your home.

MAINTAIN A VIGOROUS AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND LAWN

Simple practices can improve the health of your lawn and protect the environment.

- Plant low-maintenance turf grass such as Kentucky bluegrass
- Water with care—actively growing grass requires only 1" of water per week. This equals one hour of sprinkling once a week if no rain has fallen.
- Set your mower blade high and keep it sharp. This encourages deep roots and healthier grass.
- Sweep up grass clippings and excess fertilizer. Stormwater will carry grass clippings and fertilizer into the creek, where it degrades water quality.
- Leave grass clippings on the lawn to mulch and provide natural fertilizer.
- Apply fertilizer once per year. Try using an organic fertilizer such as Milorganite or Ringers. Thoroughly water after fertilizing to encourage the fertilizer to soak into the soil.
- Apply broadleaf herbicide sparingly and only in the fall.

MANAGE INVASIVE NONNATIVE SPECIES

Invasive species can quickly take over a landscape. Take the time to learn about invasive species on your property and take steps to control the spread of these species. Along Valley Creek, buckthorn (pictured at right) is one invasive species of concern. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources has information on this and other invasive species at:

www.dnr.state.mn.us/invasives/index.html

RAKE LEAVES

Leaves add nutrients and use up oxygen as they decompose in Valley Creek. Raking leaves as soon as they fall will prevent them from entering the creek.

DIRECT RAIN GUTTERS INTO THE LAWN

This will encourage stormwater to soak into the ground rather than running off hard surfaces.

AVOID DETERGENT AND FERTILIZER WITH PHOSPHORUS, OR USE THEM CONSERVATIVELY

Read labels and purchase low- or no-phosphate detergent. Phosphorus is the primary culprit of decreased water quality in Valley Creek. Phosphorus comes from detergents, but also from leaves, grass, and other organic materials.

MAINTAIN YOUR SEPTIC SYSTEM

Your on-site septic system should be inspected annually.

CLEANUP AFTER PETS AND KEEP LIVESTOCK OUT OF THE CREEK'S BUFFER ZONE

Animal waste can contribute harmful bacteria and excess nutrients to the creek. Prevent livestock from entering the creek's buffer zone and clean up after pets as soon as possible to prevent waste from washing into the creek.

ENHANCE CREEK HABITAT

Use native plants to create a buffer between your lawn and creek. Install nesting boxes to encourage wildlife.

Henderson, Carrol L., Carolyn J. Dindorf, and Fred J. Rozumalski. *Lakescaping for Wildlife and Water Quality*. St. Paul: State of Minnesota, Department of Natural Resources.

Some photos provided by the Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance.