



The Colors of Fall

When the weather cools, it is beautiful to watch the leaves turn vibrant colors. However, once they fall off the trees, they can clog our storm sewers and pollute our waterways.

Autumn is marked by falling temperatures, falling rain and falling leaves. For municipalities these seasonal changes bring new challenges. The issue with fall foliage in a stormwater sewer system is that leaf litter contributes phosphorus and nitrogen to water. While nutrients like these may sound like a positive additive, in excess they cause what is known as eutrophication, and can also produce harmful algal blooms. Both lead to depleted oxygen content in water, which can harm ecosystems and aquatic life.

In nature, soil and plants absorb the extra water and nutrients that autumn brings, but in the West Valley, the storm sewer system takes it all in. And, as the runoff is not treated before being discharged into local creeks and the Bay, the nutrient content of that stormwater can have a major impact on the health of our waterways.

With fall in full effect, you can do your part to make a positive impact by managing your green waste properly.

- Always dispose of your yard waste in your green waste bin.
- Keep sidewalks, curbsides and stormwater drains clear by raking leaves and disposing them in your green waste bin.
- Use fall leaves for winter mulch.
- Don't sweep your leaves in the street!
- Don't burn leaves. It is illegal and damaging to air quality.
- Go to www.cleancreeks.org for more information on how you can prevent water pollution.

Remember, only rain in the storm drain!

