

The Lynnhaven Friendly Home



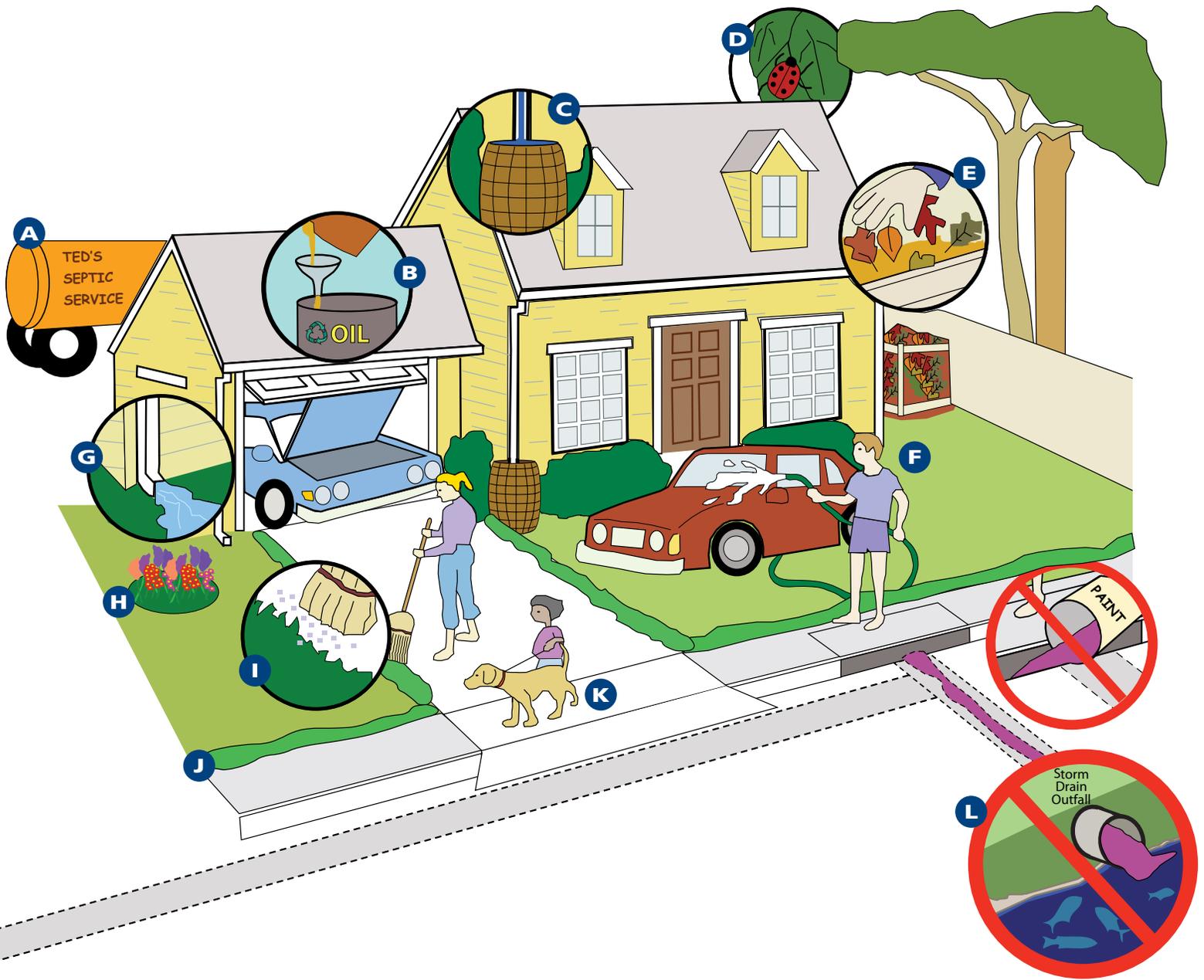
PHOTO BY PETER FISHER

There are many choices we make in the care of our homes and lawns that can be beneficial to the Lynnhaven River. Before you fertilize your lawn, wash your car or choose plants for your gardens this spring, think about how your choices may affect the health of our waterways.

HERE ARE SOME TIPS:

- Do you have downspouts where the water flows directly onto impervious surface like a driveway or sidewalk? Think about installing a **rain barrel** on your downspout. A rain barrel will capture your roof runoff and make it available for you to use to irrigate your garden, wash your car or give your dog a bath. And you are keeping that water out of the storm drain. For more information: <http://www.LRNNow.org/rainbarrels.aspx>
- Picking up after your pets regularly is one of the most important things you can do to help us reduce bacteria in the Lynnhaven River. Get a **"Scoop the Poop"** sticker for your trash can and be a responsible pet owner. For more information: www.LRNNow.org.
- Occasionally, we all need to wash our car, but please do not let the soap run into the storm drain and into our river. If you take your car to a commercial car wash facility, the water will be captured and reused. If you wash your car at home, please pull it up on the grass where the water and soap will run off on the lawn and soak into the ground not into the river.
- Keeping the **gutter area** in front of your house free of debris (grass clippings, leaves, soil or sand, and trash) keeps these pollutants out of the storm drain and out of our river. And as a Virginia Beach homeowner, it is your responsibility.
- Raise your mower blade and keep it sharp, leave your grass clipping on the lawn and mow your lawn at a height of 3 inches or higher. Consistently **mowing your lawn** at a height of 3 inches or higher improves the health of your lawn and allows your lawn to capture more rain water. For more information: https://www.LRNNow.org/files/pages/Lawn_Care_Publication.pdf.
- Do you have a low area where water collects? This may be the perfect location for a rain garden. A **rain garden** can be a beautiful way to reduce erosion and runoff from your yard. LRNNow has a helpful publication on rain gardens that you can get from our office or from our website: <https://www.LRNNow.org/files/pages/RainGarden.pdf>.
- A **buffer garden** between your lawn and the street or between your lawn and a waterway, can greatly reduce the runoff of sediments, nutrients and toxins from your property. For more information, refer to LRNNow's buffer publication on our website: https://www.LRNOW.org/files/pages/Buffer_2010.pdf.
- Consider trying a year **without fertilizing your lawn** and see what happens. You may be surprised at how well your lawn does without fertilizer.
- Look for **natives** when you are selecting plants for your landscape. Native plants are perfectly suited for our climate and they also provide habitat and food for our native birds and butterflies that we all love.
- Watch for information fall, 2011 about LRNNow's new **PEARL HOME PROGRAM**. You could be a Pearl Home.

THE LYNNHAVEN FRIENDLY HOME



- A** Have your septic tank pumped and septic systems inspected regularly.
- B** Check car for leaks and recycle used motor oil. Never pour it on the ground or into a storm drain.
- C** Rain barrels capture the water running off your roof, keeping it out of the storm drain and making it available for your use.
- D** Minimize pesticides, learn about Integrated Pest Management (IPM)
- E** Compost yard wastes - leaves and grass. Don't dump them in ditches or waterways.
- F** Take your car to a car wash or park it on the grass to wash so that the cleaners don't run off into storm drains.

- G** Direct downspouts onto lawns and away from paved surfaces.
- H** Rain Gardens are perfect for a low area in your yard or for capturing roof drainage and they can be beautiful.
- I** Follow directions on fertilizer labels and sweep off driveways, sidewalks, and roads so that the chemicals won't get into storm drains
- J** A Buffer Garden along the waterway or the street reduces the runoff from your yard and helps to filter pollutants.
- K** Pick up after your pet. Don't let pet waste wash into storm drains
- L** Never put any kind of waste into storm drains. The waste goes right into our rivers, lakes, and oceans untreated!