



The Squeeze on Car Washing...

Wash-n-Where?

Washing our cars in our driveways is one of the most environmentally un-friendly chores we can do around the house. Unlike household waste water that enters sewers or septic systems and undergoes treatment before it is discharged into the environment, what runs off from your car goes right into storm drains -- and eventually into rivers, streams, creeks and wetlands where it may poison aquatic life and wreaks other ecosystem havoc. After all, that water is loaded with a **witch's brew** of gasoline, oil and residues from exhaust fumes -- as well as the harsh detergents being used for the washing itself. This is the reason there is an Ordinance in Osceola County against this.



Commercial Car Washes Treat Waste Water...

On the other hand, federal law in the U.S. require commercial carwash facilities to drain their wastewater into sewer systems, so it gets treated before it is discharged back into the great outdoors. And commercial car washes use computer controlled systems and high-pressure nozzles and pumps that minimize water usage. Many also recycle and re-use the rinse water.

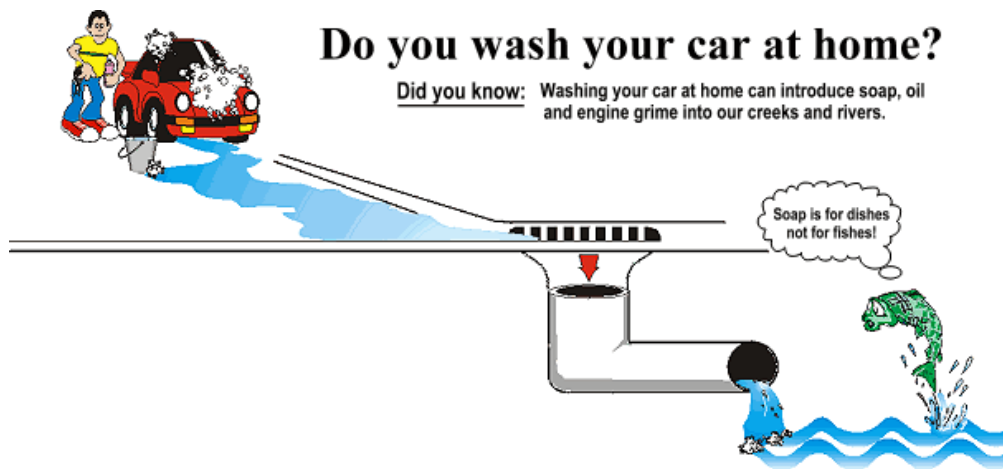


Think Green When Washing Your Car...

If you must wash your car at home, choose a biodegradable soap specifically formulated for automotive parts, such as Simple Green's Car Wash or Gliptone's Wash 'n Glow. Or you can make your own biodegradable car wash by mixing one cup of liquid dishwashing detergent and 3/4 cup of powdered laundry detergent (each should be chlorine- and phosphate-free and non-petroleum-based) with three gallons of water. This concentrate can then be used sparingly with water over exterior car surfaces.

This recipe can be found @: <http://scienceofeverydaylife.discoveryeducation.com/families/pdfs/activities/Green-Car-Wash-Challenge.pdf>

Even when using green-friendly cleaners, it is better to avoid the driveway and instead wash your car on your lawn or over dirt (If you don't have a lawn, try parking it on a gravel surface, where water can also percolate into the soil) so that the waste water can be absorbed and neutralized in soil instead of flowing directly into storm drains or open water bodies.



A Better Car Wash Option for Fundraising...

One last caution: Kids and parents planning a fundraising car wash event should know that they might be violating clean water laws if run-off is not contained and disposed of properly. Some car wash facilities, allow fund-raisers to sell tickets redeemable at local car washes, enabling the organizations to still make money while keeping dry and keeping local waterways clean.

If the group decides to do a fundraiser car wash the practices below would need to be followed:

- **Good Housekeeping Practice #1:**
Before beginning your car wash, remove all trash and debris from the car washing area.
- **Good Housekeeping Practice #2:**
Use only soaps, cleaners, or detergents labeled "non-toxic", "phosphate free", or "biodegradable". The safest products for the environment are vegetable-based or citrus-based soaps.
- **Good Housekeeping Practice #3:**
Avoid the use of acid-based wheel cleaners.
- **Good Housekeeping Practice #4:**
Minimize the amount of water or soapy wash water running off the car washing area by implementing the following:
 - Always shut off or kink the hoses when not in use.
 - Whenever possible, select a site where the cars can be driven onto grass or gravel for washing. Or, select a site where wash water will

drain onto grass, gravel, or landscaping, or divert the wash water



(as pictured).

This will allow the soapy water to filter through vegetation and soil instead of flowing into a storm drain.

- Use a bucket of soapy water to re-soap rags or sponges throughout the wash rather than adding more soap directly to the rag/sponge.
- Do not empty buckets of soapy or rinse water into the parking lot, street, gutter, or storm drains. Always empty buckets into the sanitary sewer system (e.g. sinks or toilets).

Because what goes in here



Ends up here

