

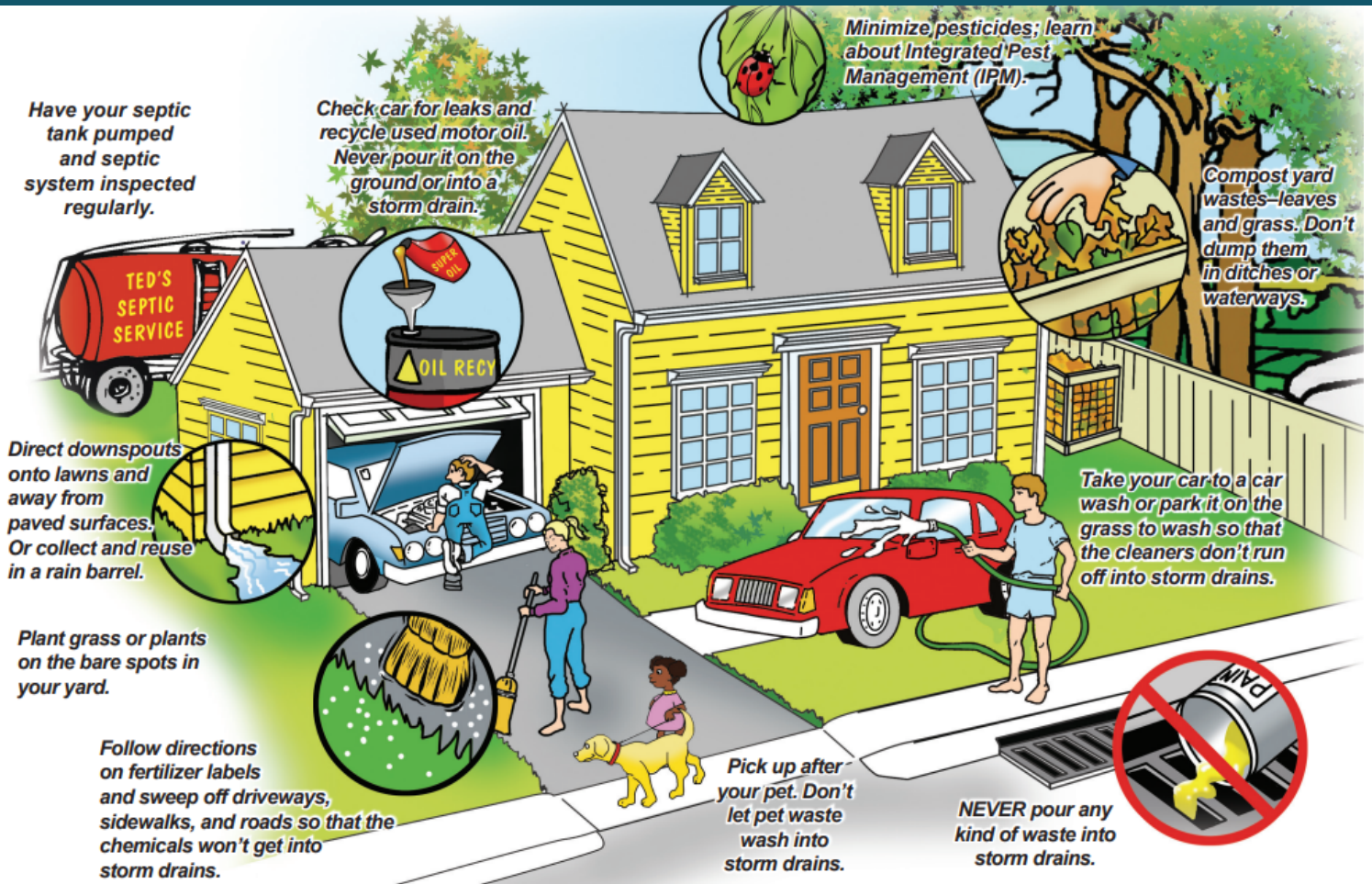
The Catalyst

Activating TN's Sustainable and Resilient Future

Office of Sustainable Practices

TN Department of Environment & Conservation

Tennessee Stormwater: Reducing Runoff and Pollution



Tennessee summers bring intense afternoon downpours that lead to significant stormwater runoff—rainwater that flows over surfaces, instead of soaking into the ground. In urban areas, impervious surfaces like roads,

rooftops, and parking lots block water absorption, increasing stormwater runoff and raising flood risks. As runoff travels, it picks up pollutants, degrading water quality and threatening ecosystems.

Residents can take action to reduce the runoff by making changes to their homes. Replacing pavement with gardens, gravel, or other [permeable surfaces](#) allows rain to soak into the soil, reducing runoff. [Redirecting downspouts](#) into landscaped areas or [rain gardens](#) helps absorb excess water. Installing [rain barrels](#) to divert water from rooftops into storage provides a free source of water for gardens or washing cars. The [Cumberland River Compact](#) is offering [rain barrels at a reduced rate](#) for Middle Tennesseans. If you are not in Middle Tennessee, check your local city or community for a similar program.

Residents can also help reduce stormwater pollution with everyday actions. [Disposing of litter legally](#) and avoiding fertilizers and pesticides prevents the contamination of runoff. Yard waste, such as mulch and trimmings, should be composted or stored securely away from storm drains. Car owners should regularly check for oil or fluid leaks and safely handle, store, and dispose of automotive chemicals. Additionally, consistently picking up pet waste and maintaining septic systems helps reduce the entry of excess nutrients and harmful bacteria into waterways.

By taking simple steps, residents can help manage flooding, reduce pollution, and protect Tennessee's valuable waterways.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Edible Landscapes: Beauty and Bounty for Your Yard this Fall

Imagine a yard that's not only beautiful but also provides delicious, fresh food. Edible landscaping blends ornamental plants with food-producing varieties, offering year-round interest and a harvest right outside your door. As fall approaches in Tennessee, it's the perfect time to plant cool-season edibles that offer striking visual appeal. Consider adding ornamental kales and cabbages with their vibrant purple, white, and green foliage for stunning color. Swiss chard provides vivid stems and nutritious leaves. For a touch of height and unique texture, celery varieties can stand tall. Even cool-season lettuces like 'Red Sails' offer attractive, colorful leaves. Don't forget herbs like sage and rosemary for their evergreen structure and aromatic appeal.



These plants thrive in Tennessee's autumn temperatures and can withstand early frosts, extending your harvest into the cooler months. Ready to transform your yard? [The University of Tennessee Extension](#) provides excellent resources to get started. Start planning your edible landscape today and enjoy the beauty and bounty it brings!

Back to School: The Sustainable Way

As the new school year begins, it's a great opportunity to bring a little sustainability into your family's routine. Kids grow quickly. Before tossing out outgrown clothes, consider donating them or organizing a neighborhood clothing swap. Before purchasing new school supplies, take stock of what you already have at home to avoid unnecessary purchases.



Encourage your child to reuse last year's backpack, lunchbox, and binders. If replacements are needed, invest in durable, high-quality items that will last for multiple years. When it comes to packing lunches, reduce food waste by involving your child in the meal planning process. They're more likely to eat what they help choose! Be sure to include reusable containers and utensils to cut down on single-use plastics.

[LEARN MORE](#)

Food Waste in Schools

Did you know that 30% to 40% of food served in US schools goes to waste, while 1 in 4 children in Tennessee face food insecurity? Whether you're a parent, educator, school staff member, or part of a local non-profit, there are ways to take action.

Join the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation's [Get Food Smart TN](#) Program for a webinar on food waste in schools. The presentation will cover an overview of the problem, potential strategies, and feature a guest speaker with hands-on experience in implementing these solutions.

SCHOOLS
STRATEGIES FOR REDUCING
FOOD WASTE

AUGUST 26TH 5:00 CST

WEBINAR
CLICK HERE!

TN Department of Environment & Conservation

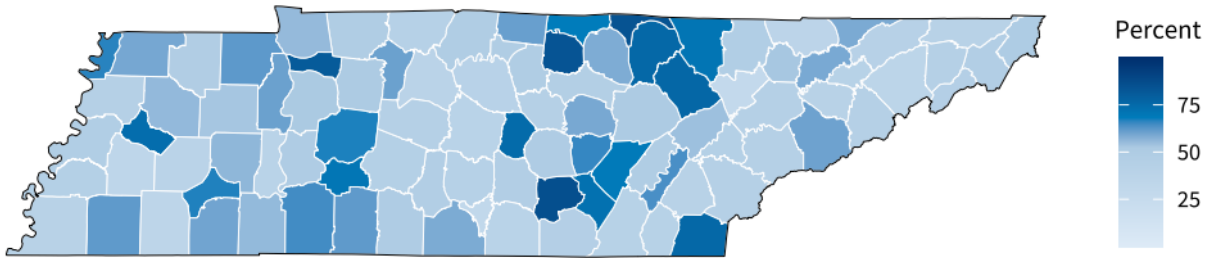
REGISTER HERE

Small Business Environmental Assistance

Tennessee

741,196 small businesses
99.5 percent of Tennessee businesses

1.2 million small business employees
41.5 percent of Tennessee employees



Share of employees working at small businesses by county

Sources of original data: [Nonemployer Statistics](#) (Census), [Statistics of U.S. Businesses](#) (Census)

Small businesses make up 99.5% of businesses in Tennessee and employ 41.5% of Tennesseans, which highlights how important they are! Each year, the [U.S. Small Business Administration's](#) Office of Advocacy creates [profiles for each state](#), answering questions about the number of small businesses, employment, and job creation.

[The Office of Advocacy](#) represents small business concerns to congress, the White House, federal agencies, and state policymakers. They help develop less burdensome regulations and amplify small business owners' voices.

Do you have a concern about a federal regulation as a small business? You can contact the Office of Advocacy through the [Red Tape Hotline](#) at (800) 827-5722 and select option 3.

Do you have a concern with a state regulation as a small business? You can contact the TN Department of Environment and Conservation's [Small Business Environmental Assistance Program](#) at (800) 734-3619, or by emailing your concern to BGSBEAP@tn.gov.

Sustainable Recipe

It's melon season in Tennessee—perfect for a [Sparkling Cantaloupe Agua Fresca](#). This simple recipe blends ripe cantaloupe, lime, honey, and sparkling water into a refreshing drink. In-season produce supports sustainability by reducing energy used for transport and storage, conserving resources and lowering

environmental impact. Prevent food waste by ensuring your cantaloupe is ripe before slicing. [Learn how to tell if it's ready to eat here.](#)



News Articles

[These elusive insects glow electric blue—and are only found in Appalachia](#)

[TDEC Seeks Applicants for Fast Charge TN Network Grants](#)

[2025 Office of Outdoor Recreation Grant Awards](#)

[Food waste is a trash problem in Memphis – and it's one we can fix](#)

[Championing Sustainability at Scenic Hills Elementary.](#)

Get Involved

Events

[Recycling Roundup](#)

Murfreesboro

August 16

[Food Donation Training for Businesses](#)

Memphis

August 20

[Living Sustainably in Nashville](#)

Nashville

September 13

[Climate Week Cook-Off](#)

Nashville

September 25

[Keep Tennessee Beautiful Clean Ups](#)

Statewide

[Materials Recovery Facility Tours](#)

Memphis

Webinars

[TDEC Reducing Food Waste in Schools Webinar](#)
August 26

Conferences

[Tennessee Sustainability Conference](#)
Gatlinburg, TN
August 20-22

[Clean Memphis Circular Summit](#)
Memphis, TN
October 22

Receive Funding

[Keep Tennessee Beautiful Law Enforcement Grant](#)

[TDEC Grants and Programs](#)

[Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program](#)

[Grants.gov](#)

Stay Connected



View this email | [Change your preferences](#) | [Unsubscribe](#) using TrueRemove™
Got this as a forward? | [View this email](#) to receive our future emails.

Davy Crockett Tower 500 James Robertson Parkway | Nashville, TN 37243 US

This email was sent to .
To continue receiving our emails, add us to your address book.

emma®

[Subscribe](#) to our email list.