

SCOOP the POOP



Grab it • Bag it • Toss it

Frequently Asked Questions

Is un-scooped dog poop really a problem?

It is estimated that dogs in Greenville County generate 15,742 **tons** of waste each year. When pet owners do not properly dispose of their pet's waste, bacteria from the waste becomes a source of water pollution. Bacteria found in animal waste is one of the most heavily regulated pollutants in waters in Greenville County, in the state of South Carolina and in waters across the United States.

Doesn't dog poop eventually just go away?

Dog poop has 23 million *E. coli* bacteria per gram. An average dog generates 276 pounds of waste each year. That's a lot *E. coli* created each year by a single dog. When their poop is not scooped, that *E. coli* lives for several years. Even though the poop may wash away, bacteria remain on the ground and can make dogs and children sick. And when un-scooped dog poop is washed away, it ends up in storm drains or enters waterways directly.

Why do I need to Scoop the Poop on my own property? Can't I just throw it in the woods or put it in the stream?

Scooping the poop is more than just a polite thing to do when you are in public or walking around your neighborhood. While dog poop does smell and is a nuisance to others, the biggest concern is the bacteria lurking in the poop. If it is not properly cleaned up, dog poop will get washed away in rain water and end up in storm drains which directly connect to our local waters. All water is connected, so the bacteria that were in your dog's un-scooped poop may even be found in the ocean. This is why when you visit the beach in the summer it is sometimes closed and is also why you are encouraged not to swim in the Reedy River downtown. Swimming in *E. coli* can be very dangerous for children and animals.

Isn't dog poop just nature's fertilizer?

While bacteria and pet waste break down naturally, the ecosystem cannot handle the number of domestic dogs we concentrate in a small area. The natural

ecosystem can only handle two canines in a square mile. In urban areas, there are 125 dogs per square mile. The natural system simply cannot filter and absorb all that poop.

Is dog poop really that much worse than other animals' waste – like geese or raccoons?

Dog poop has 23 million *E. coli* bacteria per gram. Not scooping the dog poop lets that *E. coli* live for several years. Human waste has 13 million and is treated when flushed down the toilet, killing bacteria before waste is released into local waters.

Wild animals, like geese and raccoons, have less *E. coli* in their feces. These wild animals also have natural population controls that limit the number of animals in one area and keep the amount of bacteria regulated.

Unlike goose and raccoon poop, the problem of dog poop has an easy solution. All you have to do is be responsible for your pet! Scoop the poop by grabbing, bagging and tossing it.

I have a small dog so why I should have to scoop the poop?

Every dog generates 23 million *E. coli* per gram of poop. Even small dogs will leave behind billions of bacteria every day in their waste. Although each household only generates a small amount of pet waste, these small amounts add up to a water quality problem every gram of dog poop can cause water pollution.

You tell us to Scoop the Poop and then throw the bags in the landfill. Isn't that just as bad as not scooping?

People are encouraged to scoop the poop using biodegradable or compostable bags, which are available at local pet stores. Landfills have liners and treatment systems, so pollutants won't leach into the environment like they would if dog poop is left on the ground. We certainly want to reduce our waste stream to landfills wherever possible. If you use biodegradable bags the dog poop can break down in a more natural way, without entering the water. Once the bags and pet waste are in the landfill, they will break down over time.

Are there environmentally-friendly options for cleaning up after my dog besides tossing potty bags into the trash?

There are a variety of simple things people can do to become more conscientious pet owners. The quickest, easiest way to get rid of a dog's poop is to put it in a plastic bag and either drop the bag in a trash can or flush the bag's contents down a toilet.

Pet owners can also use pet waste composters or digesters to clean up after their dogs. These are simple and inexpensive methods for disposing of poop that is good for the environment and reduces the amount of waste collected at landfills. Stool that is disposed of in the pet waste digester is broken down through added enzymes and water to create a better yard. The poop is carried through the system to the areas surrounding the digester spot, much like a septic system. The end product becomes a fertilizer that you never have to touch. Once you add the waste and enzymes, the digester does all the work for you!

Composting your dog's waste is an easy process. Choose a sunny, dry spot near the dog area to create your compost bin, separate from your garden compost pile.

You will need to use a specialized dog waste bin to reach the high temperatures necessary to eliminate pathogens at a quick pace. A bin also enables you to easily turn the compost and have increased aeration. You will need a shovel full of sawdust or another carbon-rich material for every two shovels full of dog waste. You mix the contents thoroughly, add in water in and cover the compost bin. Microbes break down the organic material and increase the temperature of the compost by releasing heat. The compost can be used in your yard as long as it is used on decorative plants only.

Why does Greenville County Soil and Water Conservation District want you to Scoop the Poop?

As part of the federal Clean Water Act, Greenville County Soil and Water Conservation District operates the County's Storm Water Education Program. When pet owners do not properly dispose of pet waste, bacteria from the waste becomes a source of water pollution. Under the Clean Water Act administered by SC DHEC, Greenville County is responsible for decreasing water pollution from storm water runoff in local lakes, rivers and streams.