

WHEN YOU FERTILIZE YOUR LAWN, YOU DON'T *JUST* FERTILIZE YOUR LAWN.

It is hard to imagine that a green, flourishing lawn could pose a threat to the environment, but **the fertilizers you apply to your lawn are potential pollutants!** If applied improperly or in excess, fertilizer can be washed off your property and end up in lakes and streams. This causes algae to grow, which uses up oxygen that fish need to survive. So, if you fertilize, please follow directions and use sparingly.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM WITH FERTILIZERS?

Fertilizer is a "growing" problem for lakes, rivers, and streams, especially if it's not used carefully. If you use too much fertilizer or apply it at the wrong time, it can easily wash off your lawn or garden into storm drains and then flow into lakes or streams. Just like in your garden, fertilizer in lakes and streams makes plants grow, leading to **algal growth in water bodies** and **problems for aquatic animals and recreation**.

YOU CAN DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT!

In recent years, since water pollution from factories have been greatly reduced, **more than 60% of water pollution comes from stormwater runoff**, which picks up pollutants like leaking oil from cars, fertilizers from farms and gardens, and failing septic tanks. All these sources add up to a big pollution problem. But each of us can do small things to help clean up our water - and careful application of fertilizer is a great start! See below to learn more.

CLEAN WATER FERTILIZATION TIPS

FERTILIZE YOUR YARD WITHOUT POLLUTING OUR WATERS!

- **Use Fertilizer Sparingly:** Many plants don't need as much fertilizer or need it as often as you might think.
- **Don't Fertilize Before a Rain Storm:** It will just wash away, not helping your yard and hurting the environment.
- **Use Organic Fertilizers:** They release nutrients more slowly.
- **Test Your Soil:** Have your soil tested before applying fertilizers to your lawn and gardens. You may find you don't need to add fertilizer at all! To order a soil test or for more information, contact the UMass Extension Soil Testing Lab at: 413-545-2311 or soiltest.umass.edu/ordering-information.