

More is not always better! Lawn Care and Water Quality

Are you in the habit of applying fertilizer to your lawn every spring? Did you know that when fertilizer is applied improperly it may pollute our Michigan waters and possibly even kill our vegetation along with fish and animals? Though we all want to have green and luscious lawns this spring and summer, we also need to be aware of the potential hazards our lawn care practices may cause.

When too much fertilizer is applied it washes off easily and becomes very harmful to the environment. This is especially true when a rain storm comes. Rain can wash fertilizer straight into the storm drain. Moreover, much of what is on the soil will eventually percolate into our groundwater systems as water gets absorbed into the earth. Therefore, it is important to avoid using fertilizer during the rain season or before a rain storm forecast.

- If a fertilizer applicator warns of keeping children and pets off the lawn for 24 hours, it would be wise to discontinue its use all together.
- Using a slow release fertilizer is effective as it spreads over time and is less likely to drain away.
- Note that when you water and mow your lawn properly, you may not need much fertilizer.
- If you must fertilize, stick to organic fertilizers and do it sparingly.

More is not better when it comes to fertilizing! If you decide to fertilize do it sparingly!

For more information on watersheds in southwest Michigan visit www.swmpc.org/water.asp.


