

YOU ARE NOT JUST FERTILIZING THE LAWN!



**You fertilize the lawn. Then it rains.
The rain washes the fertilizer along the curb, into the storm drain,
and directly into our inland lakes, streams, and Lake Michigan.
This causes algae to grow, which uses up oxygen that fish need to survive.
So if you fertilize, please follow directions and use sparingly.**

**Southwest Michigan
Water Quality
Coalition**

www.swmpc.org/water.asp

What Can I Do?

Simple Tips for Landscaping/Gardening - To Protect Water Quality

- ☔ **When landscaping your yard, plant native plants and grasses and minimize lawn areas, which require higher maintenance such as watering, fertilizers and pesticides (visit www.for-wild.org for more information on native plants)**
- ☔ **Use landscaping techniques such as rain gardens in low areas of the lawn to increase infiltration and decrease runoff (visit www.raingardens.org for instructions on creating a rain garden)**
- ☔ **Leave lawn clippings on your lawn so that nutrients in the clippings are recycled and less yard waste is produced**
- ☔ **Plant native vegetation or spread mulch on bare ground to help prevent erosion of soil**
- ☔ **Use porous materials for walkways and overflow parking areas (such as interlocking stones or bricks) to increase infiltration and decrease runoff (visit <http://www.greenworks.tv/stormwater/porous-pavement.htm> for more information)**
- ☔ **Keep storm gutters and drains clean of debris and yard waste and NEVER dump anything down the storm drain**

Other landscaping tips:

1. If you elect to use a professional lawn care service, select a company that employs trained technicians and follows practices designed to minimize the use of fertilizers and pesticides.

2. Compost your yard trimmings. Compost is a valuable soil conditioner, which gradually releases nutrients to your lawn and garden. Using compost will also decrease the amount of fertilizer you need to apply. In addition, compost retains moisture in the soil and thus helps you conserve water. For more information on composting visit:
<http://www.deq.state.mi.us/documents/deq-wmd-swp-compostbroch.pdf>

3. Test your soil before applying fertilizers. Over-fertilization is a common problem, and the excess can leach into ground water or contaminate rivers or lakes. Use slow-release fertilizers on areas where the potential for water contamination is high, such as sandy soils, steep slopes, compacted soils, and near water bodies. Select the proper season to apply fertilizers; incorrect timing may encourage weeds or stress grasses.

**For Additional Information Contact
Your County's Michigan State
University Extension office:
Cass MSUE: (269) 445-4438
Berrien MSUE: (269) 944-4126**

keep it **BLUE**
 only rain in the drain

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