

# You're not just fertilizing the lawn.



Image courtesy of Washington State Department of Ecology

Fertilizers—nitrogen and phosphorus—are good for plants but not for water quality. In ponds, streams and rivers, fertilizers are pollutants that harm fish and wildlife, can cause smelly algae blooms, and can even affect drinking water.

## Be a Lawn Hero: Protect Your Local Waterways!

- Recycle grass clippings with a mulching mower. Clippings are a free, natural fertilizer—and all that most lawns need.
- Sweep or blow grass clippings and fertilizers off of pavement, and away from storm drains and wetlands.
- Never fertilize before a heavy rainstorm (light rain is ok).
- Don't apply fertilizer with phosphorous to an existing lawn. It's illegal in MA unless a soil test says you need it.
- Choose fertilizers with 75-100% “slow-release” or “water insoluble” nitrogen.

### Learn More About Soil Testing

Of those who fertilize, a mere 10-20% get a soil test to understand their exact lawn needs. (CWP 1999).

Save hundreds on wasted fertilizer with an inexpensive soil test from the UMass Soil Test Lab. It gives you scientific fertilizer recommendations for your unique lawn.

*Lawn fertilizers (and other pollutants such as pesticides, oil, gasoline, antifreeze and dog waste) mix with rain and irrigation runoff, wash into storm drains on the street, and empty into local waterways, with no filtration or treatment.*

