

Stormwater and Your Lawn- Issue 1: Fertilizer



When it rains, the water washes fertilizer and other pollutants from our lawns over our driveways, sidewalks, and roads, into our storm drains where it flows directly – and untreated – into our rivers, lakes, and streams.



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Fertilizer

Phosphorus – commonly found in fertilizers – can cause toxic algae blooms and fish kill. Under Massachusetts law, you can only apply fertilizer with phosphorus if a soil test shows that phosphorus is needed or during the first growing season for a newly established lawn. All stormwater runoff in Woburn eventually flows to the Mystic River, which is listed as impaired for phosphorus. In addition, the use of organic fertilizers can have better, longer-term benefits for your lawn and garden. Organic fertilizers feed the soil, not just the plant. If everyone used phosphorous-free fertilizers it would help make the river cleaner!



Trying to figure out how to take care of your plants while also protecting our water? Consider the following tips:

- Test your soil and apply fertilizers only as needed
- Use Phosphorus-free fertilizers (the middle number is “0”)
- Use slow-acting fertilizers Follow instructions and do not over-fertilize
- Do not apply fertilizer before a rainstorm
- Leave grass clippings and add compost to your garden and lawn

