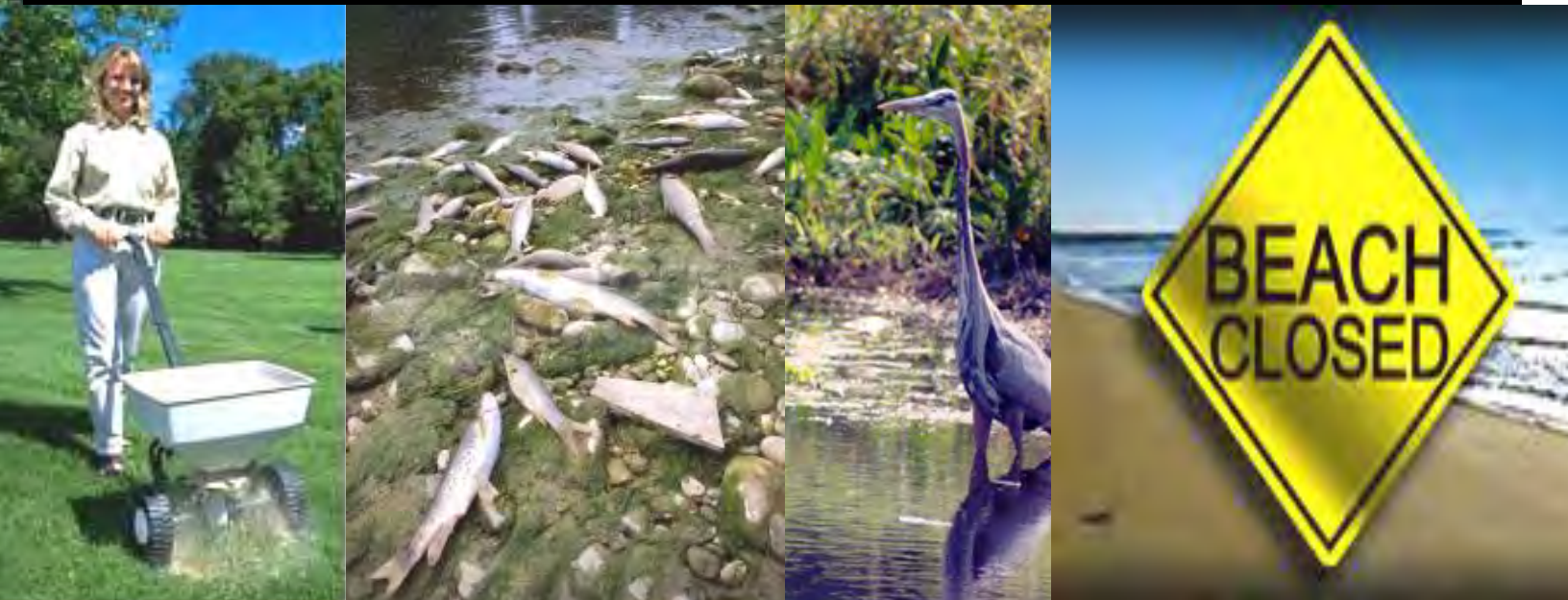


YOU ARE NOT JUST FERTILIZING THE LAWN!



**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.**

Protect Van Buren County Lakes and
Ground Water

www.pawpaw.net/lake.html

www.TwoRiversCoalition.org

www.vbco.org/natfeat0002.asp

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 less likely to drain away.
- Note that when you water and mow your lawn properly, you may need much fertilizer. For suggestions on mowing and watering these on-line resources:
<http://www.turf.msu.edu/docs/turftipsE13.pdf> or
www.richsoil.com/lawn
- 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, please, do it do it sparingly!

In Van Buren County there is a county-wide regulation regarding the use of phosphorous in fertilizers. Visit www.TwoRiversCoalition.org/phosphorus.asp for information.

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



and is

not
visit

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/porouspavement.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:

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States -
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Fax: 269-657-6678**

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

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