

# Take Care with Lawn Care



**A soil test should be taken** to determine the need for phosphorous. Most of the soil tests show that Southwest Michigan lawns don't need additional phosphorus. Apply it only if it is required or if you are planting grass from seed. Using phosphorous wisely and efficiently reduces the phosphorous load in our lakes and streams.

**Extra care should be taken when applying any fertilizer or pesticide** to the lawn. The lawn is like a sponge and is very good at trapping water and reducing runoff, but it does no good if lawn care products are spread onto hard surfaces like sidewalks and driveways and then washed into the storm water drainage system. Do your part to sweep or blow granular products back into the lawn where they stay put.

**Mow only as often as you need** to keep your lawn in good shape. For most lawns, that means cutting your grass no lower than 2.5 inches; keeping many grasses as long as 3.5 inches is ideal for crowding out crab grass and other weeds.

**Minimize the amount of pesticides and herbicides** you apply to your lawn, and use organic fertilizers.

**If you're in the market for a lawn care company**, seek out one that uses "natural" management practices as opposed to heavy chemical treatments.



**Leave grass clippings on the lawn** after you mow to provide your lawn with a natural (and free) source of nutrients, or compost the clippings for use in your garden.

## **Believe it or not....**

The average gasoline mower tested by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency emits in one hour of operation the same amount of hydrocarbons (air pollutants) that a 1992 Ford Explorer emits over 23,600 miles!

Source: Green Seal