

When rain falls and snow melts, the runoff produced picks up a variety of contaminants such as oil, metals, salts, pet waste, fertilizer, and grass clippings as it flows over roofs, roadways, sidewalks and lawns.

Stormwater runoff ultimately flows into storm drains.

**Remember: storm drains lead directly to our local rivers and streams.**

*Fertilizer from lawns can enter waterways through storm drains. This can add excess nutrients to water bodies causing an overgrowth of algae and aquatic plants. This leads to low oxygen levels and poor water quality. Use these tips to practice water friendly fertilizer use.*

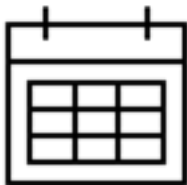
## DO I NEED FERTILIZER?



The most accurate way to learn what nutrients, if any, your lawn needs is a soil test. Test kits are available for \$25 through MSU Extension. They can also be found online or at your local hardware store.

Correct watering ( $\frac{1}{2}$  -  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in./week), mowing (keep grass at 3 in.), and other lawn care practices can reduce or even eliminate the need for fertilizer.

## WHEN SHOULD I BE FERTILIZING?



If you do need to fertilize, fall is a good choice for the health of your lawn. This will boost roots, helping with strong lawn growth in the spring.

Check the weather. Avoid applying fertilizer if there is rain in the forecast. This will help to keep fertilizer from washing into storm drains.

## HOW DO I PICK THE RIGHT FERTILIZER?



Avoid “weed-and-feed” mixtures of fertilizer and herbicides, Use Earth friendly fertilizers, which have low or no phosphorus, and slow releasing nitrogen.

## WHAT ELSE SHOULD I KNOW?



Be sure to sweep extra fertilizer beads off paved surfaces and back onto your lawn. When left unswept, unused fertilizer beads will end up in stormwater runoff and in our local rivers and streams.

Using compost instead of fertilizer is a good way to give your soil a boost naturally.

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