



Your Lawn & THE GREAT LAKES

Caring for your lawn means caring about the environment, especially when it comes to our rivers, lakes and streams. The Great Lakes are a national and international treasure, representing more than 90 percent of the fresh surface water in the United States. Good lawn maintenance practices help protect the Great Lakes and improve water quality. It's easy to care for your lawn and conserve water resources. By making proper lawn care practices routine, we all can enjoy great lawns and the Great Lakes for future generations. If you have a lawn, make these following tips part of your routine.

Stewardship Begins in Your Backyard

- The foundation of a good lawn is rich soil. Use a mulching mower to return grass clippings to the soil where they break down and recycle nutrients.
- Set your mower to its highest setting to build strong, deep roots that can find water and nutrients and better withstand periods of heat and drought.
- Generally, only new lawns require additional phosphorus for root growth. For mature lawns, choose a fertilizer designed for lawns and is phosphorus-free, unless a soil test shows a need for this nutrient.
- The best time to fertilize is in the spring and fall. Never fertilize when the ground is frozen.
- Use a drop spreader or a rotary spreader with a side guard to keep fertilizer on the lawn.
- Sweep grass clippings and fertilizer that lands on driveways and sidewalks back onto the lawn to help keep nutrients out of waterways.

- If you need to water your lawn, the best time is in the morning. Water easily evaporates in the afternoon. Watering at night can cause fungus and other diseases.
- In the fall, mulch leaves using your lawnmower. Leaves will break down and enrich the soil.
- If lawn problems arise, select the right product. For small problems, use a spot treatment. For numerous problems throughout the yard, use a broadcast application.
- Use native plants in your landscape and garden. These are adapted to your area and are better able to tolerate adverse conditions and resist disease.

Water Resources and Your Lawn

- Heavy rainfall can overwhelm soils and cause fertilizers to be washed into waterways. Avoid application when rain is in the forecast.
- Storm sewers often lead directly into streams and lakes. Never dispose of clippings or pet waste in or around sewers or water resources, such as rivers, lakes and streams. Make it a habit to sweep up any fertilizer, grass clippings and leaves.