



Best Practices for Lawn Care

- Choose a fertilizer designed for lawns (N-P-K grade of 29-2-4 or a similar high nitrogen, low phosphorus fertilizer). Follow the label instructions for best results. If the product does not list a spreader setting or a spreader type, it should not be used on home lawns. Buy the amount of product you need for the current growing season.
- Apply fertilizer when your grass is actively growing, which is after you have begun mowing. If the grass is not growing enough to be mowed, wait to apply fertilizer.
- Apply fertilizer to the lawn, keeping it off hard surfaces (walks, driveways, etc) where it can be washed into storm sewers. If fertilizer gets on hard surfaces, sweep it back into the lawn. Using a drop spreader or a rotary spreader with a deflector shield makes it simple and easy to keep fertilizer on the lawn. Also keep lawn clippings, leaves, and other plant material off of walks, driveways and roadways to prevent them from entering storm sewers and surface waters.
- Avoid fertilizer application if a major rain event is anticipated within 24 hours. Even though healthy lawns effectively hold nutrients in place, heavy rainfall could cause some nutrients to flow off the lawn and into surface waters.
- Mow your lawn at the highest mower setting (~ 4 inches) and leave the grass clippings on your lawn. Mowing high allows the grass to develop a deep root system that retains and uses water more efficiently. Returning clippings to the lawn recycles nutrients, organic matter and moisture back into the soil.
- Use water wisely through proper irrigation. Consider how you use your lawn in determining if you need to water. Also, the appearance of your lawn will tell you when it is time to water (leaves will begin to wilt/curl and develop a bluish cast). If no rain has fallen, lawns in sandy soil can go ~ 5 days between irrigations, while lawns in heavy clay soils can go ~ 20 days.
- Fertilize in the fall (between Labor Day and Halloween). It is the best time of year to feed, helping your lawn recover from summer stress and giving you a great looking, healthy lawn next spring.
- If you have pest problems, first consider spot treatment with a ready-to-use product, and only use broadcast applied pest control products when there is a large, widespread problem. Spot treating with ready-to-use products eliminates mixing, measuring and waste. Broadcast treating with ready-to-use granular products for widespread pest problems (large weed or insect problem), likewise eliminates mixing, measuring, and makes off-target product easy to sweep back onto your lawn.

