

2011 NJ Fertilizer Law Protects Waterways and Ground Water

If you have a lawn anywhere in NJ and fertilize it, this law affects you.

Homeowners cannot apply fertilizer **before March 1st or after November 15th** in any calendar year. Fertilizer is best applied when turf is actively growing or there is the risk of fertilizer runoff or leaching into ground water.

In addition, in order to decrease the risk of runoff, the law says: don't apply fertilizer during or just before a heavy rain; don't leave it on an impervious surface like pavement – sweep up any fertilizer that falls onto an impervious surface; don't apply it to frozen ground.

Lawn care professionals are required to go through training and become certified, or be supervised by a certified individual, in order to apply fertilizer to turf.

You may not need fertilizer! Test your soil **before** you apply fertilizer. Rutgers does soil testing: <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/soiltestinglab/>

For more information on this law, see <https://sebsnjaesnews.rutgers.edu/2013/11/nj-fertilizer-law-restrictions-on-home-lawn-applications-now-in-effect/>



Working with Lawn Care Services

- Look for organic lawn care service providers or providers that use Integrated Pest Management in this area. Check [www.njaes.rutgers.edu/organiclandcare](http://njaes.rutgers.edu/organiclandcare).
- Request a mower blade setting of 3"-4" and ask that they leave the grass clippings on the lawn for nutrient recycling.
- Request natural or organic fertilizers based on soil test recommendations.
- Refuse routine applications of pesticides. If truly needed, ask a licensed professional to apply as little as possible.



Resources

Rutgers on Organic Lawn Care: <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/organiclandcare>

Lawn Care without Pesticides (Cornell U): <https://ecommons.cornell.edu/handle/1813/3574>

EPA on nutrient pollution:
<https://www.epa.gov/nutrientpollution>

EPA on Integrated Pest Management: <https://www.epa.gov/managing-pests-schools/introduction-integrated-pest-management>

CDC on Pesticides: https://www.cdc.gov/nceh/multimedia/pdf/Pesticide_Exposure-P.pdf

Rain Garden Information: http://www.water.rutgers.edu/Rain_Gardens/RGWebsite/rginfo.html

More questions? Call a Rutgers Master Gardener:
<https://njaes.rutgers.edu/mastergardeners/helplines.asp>

Prepared by the Summit, NJ Environmental Commission, 2016

The City of Summit
Environmental Commission
Presents:

Healthier Lawns



Cleaner Water



Save money while protecting children, pets and the environment.



Imagine...

Cutting lawn care costs

Healthy soils with deep-rooted grass and healthy microbes require less watering and fertilizing so they save you money.

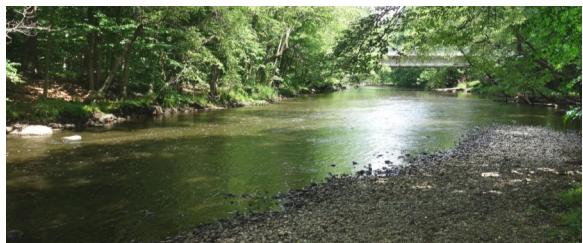
Less worrying when kids and pets play on grass not treated with pesticides



Stop fretting about the risks to children and pets from pesticides and fertilizers. And no pesticides get tracked into your house.

Feeling good about helping keep local rivers clean

Fertilizers in water runoff drain right into our local rivers. Remember, we all live downstream from some people and upstream from others, so we all need to work on reducing pollutants entering our waterways.



Best Practices for Lawn Care: Work with Nature, Not Against It

A healthy lawn needs nutrients and microbe-rich soil to develop into dense turf, which resists drought, insects and diseases without added pesticides and fertilizer.

- Mow high with sharp blades – 3” or taller – to build healthy soil and thick, dense turf. This also reduces weed growth.
- Leave clippings on the lawn to add nutrients to the soil and reduce need for water.
- Water only when soil is dry 6” down, 1” water per week (including rainfall).
- Test your soil **before** adding amendments. Rutgers does soil testing and makes recommendations: <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/soiltestinglab/>
- Spread 1/4” of compost each fall to condition your soil.
- Seed with a mix of cool season grasses, best done in September or October.
- Help manage water in your yard by installing a rain garden.



Eliminate/Reduce Pesticide Use

Pesticides are grub control, weed killer, fungus treatment, insect spray, crab grass preventer, insecticides and herbicides.

According to the CDC, evidence suggests that children are at greater risk of illness or injury from exposure to pesticides, including effects on brain development.

Adverse effects of pesticide exposure range from dizziness and nausea to serious neurological, developmental and reproductive disorders.



Strive for zero use of pesticides on your lawn. Use as little as possible only if nothing else is working, and keep children and pets away. Be sure to read the labels and carefully follow the directions. Pesticides are toxic!

