

## Fertilizer Tips:

There are two ways you can help protect NJ's waterways and keep your lawns health. 1) Select a low or no phosphorus fertilizer designed for lawns and 2) Apply it to your lawn properly.

Follow these lawn care best practices to do your part to improve the quality of NJ's water:

- Choose a low or no phosphorus fertilizer. Check the second number on the package formula, 26-0-3, for example, means no phosphate. Bags of lawn fertilizer have 3 numbers on them (Example 26-0-3). Find the phosphorus percent by looking at the middle number. A "zero in the middle" means no phosphorus, a 2 or 3 in the middle means low phosphorus.
- Avoid use of "all-purpose" type fertilizer products on your lawn. Choose natural organic fertilizer, or, slow release ( at least 40%) nitrogen synthetic fertilizer.
- Apply fertilizer at the spreader setting shown on the bag. Following Application, return any unused product to the original container for future use. Do not apply fertilizer products if eavy rain is expected.
- Use a drop spreader or a rotary spreader with a side guard to keep fertilizer on the lawn. Keep fertilizer off walks, driveways, and roadways where it can be washed into storm sewers.
- Mow your lawn at a high or the highest mower setting and leave the grass clippings on your lawn. Mowing high allows the grass to develop a deep root system that retains and uses water ore efficiently. Returning clippings to the lawn recycles nutrients and moisture back into the soil.
- Fertilize in the spring after the first lawn cutting. Only apply fertilizer when your grass is growing enough to be mowed. Fall is the best time to fertilize your lawn, for a healthier, greener lawn next spring.
- Soil tests can help identify if other nutrients are needed. Contact your County Extension Agent or details and other helpful lawn and garden information. (Visit <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/county/> )

Concern with excess nutrient runoff has led a number of NJ municipalities and counties to ban or restrict phosphorus fertilizers.