



How you care for your lawn and garden can affect water quality

Before you fertilize your lawn or garden, have the soil tested to determine the amounts of fertilizer that are needed. It's best to test; but if you don't, then purchase fertilizer with no phosphorus (or "P") – fertilizers with a zero in the middle. Most lawns do not need phosphorus fertilizer.

Fertilizer should be applied when the plants are actively growing.

Apply fertilizer and weed killers in the recommended amounts. Over-applying fertilizers and weed killers to your lawn will result in the excess washing off the lawn, down the storm sewer and into the nearest stream. That can lead to unpleasant algae blooms, fish kills and filthy water.

Sweep weed killers and fertilizers off sidewalks, streets and driveways. Avoid allowing grass clippings and other yard waste near the storm sewer. The storm drain is for snow and rain. Use the clippings as mulch or compost.

Avoid applying weed killers and fertilizers if rain is predicted within 24 hours.

Alternatively consider a natural lawn or organic garden, where no fertilizers, weed killers or pesticides are used. Pull weeds by hand. Leave clover in the yard; it will naturally add nitrogen to the soil.

Use a funnel when you put gasoline in your lawnmower to avoid spills.

