

You can save some \$Green\$ by testing your brown!



In recent years, increased use of lawn and agricultural fertilizers has caused concern about the pollution of lakes, streams and groundwater. While proper application and amounts of

fertilizer can benefit your yard, misuse can not only harm your lawn, it can harm our water quality and the environment as well. When excess nutrients enter a water source, either by water runoff or soil leachate, algal blooms occur, often making the water green, cloudy and smelly. These blooms deplete the oxygen level in the water suffocating fish and other species that live there.

Many times lawns already have all the nutrients they need to grow lush green grass and adding unnecessary fertilizer is a waste of money. **Having your soil tested** for adequate nutrients and pH balance is a sure way to save you money and help keep our water clean.

What happens when too much fertilizer gets in the water...?

...and finally

It starts like this...



then we get this...



and this...



1. After having your soil tested, only fertilize the parts of your lawn that need extra nutrients.
2. Be careful not to get fertilizer on sidewalks or driveways. If you do then sweep it up with a broom so it doesn't run off to the storm drain in the rain or when the sprinkler turns on.
3. Test your soil every year. Don't get in the habit of fertilizing year after year.
4. Try using phosphorous-free or organic fertilizer.
5. Leave grass clippings on your lawn. The two primary nutrients in fertilizer are nitrogen and phosphorous - the same nutrients in the clippings. Spread out the clumps so you don't kill the grass, and make certain the clippings don't go near the storm drain.
6. Fertilize in the spring or fall.
7. Always apply **after** a rain, never before or during a rain.
8. Be open minded to having a variety of lawn species in your yard. Having a variety can make your lawn hardier in times of drought, saving money on watering and spraying herbicides.
9. Read labels carefully. Only apply the amount suggested by the manufacturer.
10. Keep your grass 3 inches tall. The longer roots promote healthier grass and helps keep the moisture in the soil. Taller grass can also have a positive affect by slowing down stormwater and filtering the runoff.

You can help fix this by using the 10 golden rules



For more information on how and where to get your soil tested

visit <http://extension.osu.edu> to find your county's OSU Extension office, or visit www.thecleanwaterbusiness.com