

HOLD THE PHOSPHOROUS

Calling all lawn jockeys: Here's a tip that could save you money. Don't pour phosphorous-based fertilizers on your grass. Not only is it probably not needed, it is a major contributor to algae growth in our streams and Lake Erie. Think about your drinking water during the hottest of summer months. Too much algae decaying in the warm lake and your water will smell and could taste like algae soup!

For the last four years, the Cuyahoga SWCD has teamed up with the Cuyahoga County Water Quality Lab to perform soil tests for homeowners. The results are in and in general, the soils that have been tested are rich in nutrients, which means, less fertilizer needs to be applied. Now, that is good news for your wallet and your drinking water.

Here is some additional food for thought: Michigan's Waterford Township Trustees is considering a pair of resolutions intended to minimize phosphorus fertilizer applications in the township. Trustee David Kramer stated that phosphorous "is a poisonous non-metallic substance in fertilizer and not necessary as a lawn supplement unless putting in a new lawn. Anything we put on our lawns is absorbed into the soil and since we're in this huge watershed, the supplement ends up in our lakes, rivers, and streams and ultimately in the Great Lakes. It causes accelerated growth of weeds and algae and that causes accelerated eutrophication of our lakes, a slow death."

So what can be done if a homeowner desires green healthy grass?

First consider getting your soil tested to determine its fertility.

Go to www.cuyahogaswcd.org to learn more. Other good tips include setting your mower so it cuts high (3-4"). Taller grass absorbs more and reduces the stress on the grass. Use a mulching mower that chops up the grass clippings or leave the clippings on the grass to decompose and provide organic fertilizer that the earthworms and soil love.

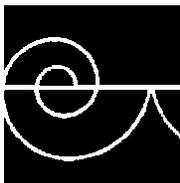
And you will help keep organic matter out of landfills.

Another money saving and eco-friendly tip is to gently water (consider a soaker hose) in the evening or early morning to avoid run off and evaporation.

No need to put money down the drain.

Watch our website for the Composting Workshops later this year and learn more about rain gardens, rain barrels and other best management practices that will transform you from a lawn jockey to backyard habitat steward.

www.cuyahogaswcd.org



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Soil and Water
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