

Nutrients are Needed for Growth

Everyone wants a nice, green lawn and believes that fertilizing is the way to achieve it. A very green lawn does not necessarily mean it is healthy and over-fertilizing your lawn can be harmful to streams and lakes. Lawn fertilizers contain nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium which are needed for plant growth. Not only does grass need nitrogen for a nice green color, but also for healthy growth and shoot density to help protect against disease and insects.

Nutrients in Our Waters

An excess of these nutrients in streams and lakes leads to excessive growth of algae. Plants and algae growing in water consume oxygen, which fish and other organisms also need to survive. The increase in growth also makes water undesirable for swimming, can make water more difficult to treat for drinking, and can cause foul odors.



Over fertilizing could be harmful to your lawn our streams, rivers, and Lake Erie

Fertilizing leads to an increase in blade growth, which means you will have to cut your lawn more often. More frequent cutting can cause damage to your grass. Too much fertilizing can also burn the

grass. A major problem with over fertilizing is that excess fertilizer washes off your lawn, into the streets, storm drains, and directly into our lakes and streams.

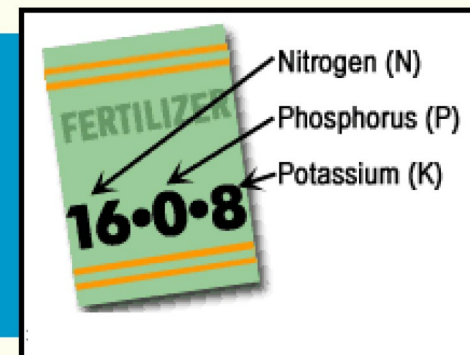
When to Fertilize

The best time to fertilize is in the fall for a healthy lawn that can withstand the harsh winter months. This is when grass roots and blades are actively growing and there are fewer weeds to compete with. At this time, grass is also more tolerant to heat and drought. Fertilizing in the fall reduces the risk of disease and weed problems.



Fertilizing Alternatives

- Leaving grass clippings on your lawn after mowing adds one pound of nitrogen per 1,000 cubic ft. per year, reducing fertilizer needs by 30%! Clippings also hold in moisture.
- Compost your yard waste to use as a natural fertilizer on your lawn in the fall.
- Use environmentally friendly organic fertilizers.



Choosing the Right Fertilizer

Test your soil to determine how much, if any, fertilizer is needed. Make sure that you pick a fertilizer that is correct for your type of grass.

Pick the right numbers. The three numbers on a bag of fertilizer represent the number of pounds of nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium in the bag of fertilizer. OSU Extension recommends 3-1-2, 4-1-2, or 5-1-2 for Ohio Lawns.

Proper Lawn Care and Maintenance

- ✿ Test your soil to determine how much fertilizer you need to apply. The Ohio State University Extension Office can provide more information on soil testing.
- ✿ A moderate amount of slow-release nitrogen fertilizer should be applied 8-10 weeks. Fast Release is more likely to burn your lawn.
- ✿ Thatch your lawn to remove dead grass and roots that can block water and nutrients from reaching the soil where grass can use it.



- ✿ Leaving your grass clippings on the lawn does not increase thatch because it is composed of mostly water.
- ✿ Apply fertilizers that are 30-50% slow release.
- ✿ Do not over water your lawn! Water weekly 1-2 hours per spot. Water in the morning to reduce evaporation. Watering at night can promote disease such as growth of mold and mildew.

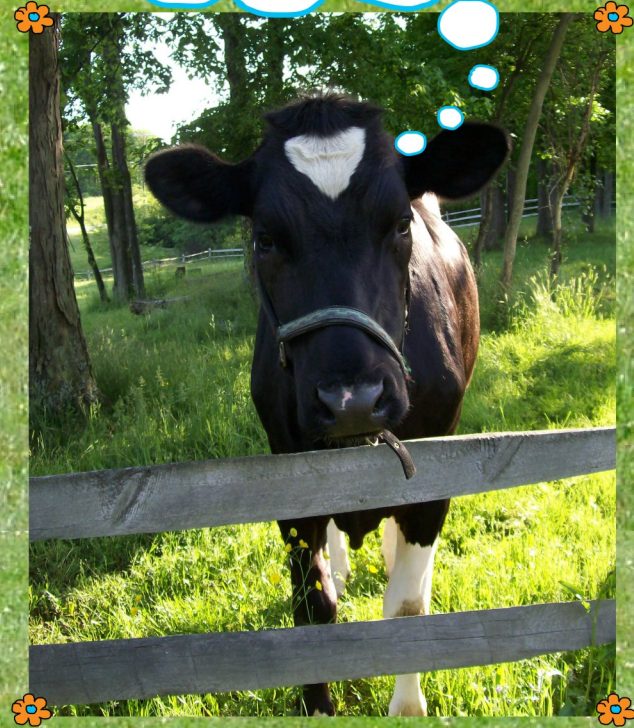
For more
information contact:

Lake County Stormwater Management Department



(440) 350-5900
www.lakecountyohio.gov/smd

**need
fertilizer?**



**FERTILIZING AND
LAWN CARE FOR
YOUR HOME**

***Lake County Stormwater
Management Department***