



Doing our Part...Lawn Care



Whether you live on the lake or any other place in the watershed, maintaining a healthy lawn (field or landscaped area) is often the first line of defense in protecting the lake. To understand this, it helps to know that most of the sediment and nutrients that enter our lake don't do so gradually, but during heavy rain events. Healthy lawns not only serve to stabilize the ground to minimize sediment run off, they act as wonderful buffers to absorb the rain and filter any contaminants / nutrients out of the water before it reaches the lake.

Do I fertilize? - It might sound like heresy, but I believe that fertilizing your lawn is often necessary in order to maintain a healthy lawn. But there are several best practices to follow to ensure that you do more good than harm. First, have your lawn tested by either a local lawn service or agricultural cooperative to determine IF you need to fertilize, as well as what nutrients are required. Next, never use fertilizers containing Phosphorus (the middle number in 10-00-10). Not only is it banned for most usage, our local soils have been shown to contain more than enough phosphorus for lawn health. Finally, do it right. Choose a day to fertilize that will be followed by gentle showers (not hard rain) or water immediately after spreading, to ensure the nutrients are dissolved and absorbed before the next hard rain which could wash them into the lake. Use only the recommended quantities to maintain your lawn, and always sweep up any fertilizer that was dropped on hard surfaces.

Keep it out of the lake – When caring for your lawn, ensure that no grass clippings, leaves or other vegetative matter enters the lake (as these or their ashes contain harmful nutrients). Please dispose of them at the local dump or consider composting them. Any mowing or blowing near the lake should be done carefully and away from the lake. Consider using a mulching mower. When used regularly, a mulching mower virtually eliminates clippings and returns all of the nutrients to the lawn, minimizing the need to fertilize. Obviously any lawn chemicals, gas and oil must also be treated carefully and disposed of properly. Oil recycling can be accomplished at many of our “Lake Friendly” automotive vendors.

Landscape to protect the lake – Consider planting buffers between your land and the lake or nearby stream. Native grasses and other ground covers serve as effective filters and stabilizers, with far less care than your lawn requires. Landscaping swales or depressions also serves to slow the flow of water to allow absorption.

Finally, if you utilize a lawn care service; insist that they follow these same best practices.