

Water is precious and we must take steps to protect it.



Good lawn care practices protect this resource while making the most efficient use of fertilizer and soil nutrients. Follow these simple steps for a healthy lawn and a healthy environment.

#### USE THE BEST ENVIRONMENTAL PRACTICES FOR LAWN FERTILIZING

Measure your lawn and only apply the amount of fertilizer needed.

Be sure your spreader is calibrated and set properly.

Never fertilize dormant or inactive turf.

Never apply fertilizer just before a heavy rain is forecast, or when the soil is saturated or frozen.

Keep fertilizer away from surface water bodies.

Keep fertilizer and clippings away from catch basins, drains, and hard surfaces as these could lead to surface waters. Clean up any that land there and put them back onto the lawn.

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### Test the soil at least every three years.

Follow recommendations for pH adjustment and nutrient applications.

### Choose the right grasses for your yard based on site conditions and how much you use your lawn.

Whenever possible include low maintenance grasses such as the fine fescues (creeping red, Chewings and hard fescue) that require less fertilizer and water.

Choose pest resistant grasses.

Don't try to grow grasses in places where they may not grow well, such as in heavy shade.

Overseed bare and thin spots to keep grasses growing and to prevent erosion and weed invasion.

### Water wisely, providing the lawn with water only when necessary.

Water established lawns deeply and infrequently, moistening the top 6" of soil.

Water new seedings and repaired areas more frequently and less deeply to ensure that small seedlings do not dry out.

Don't overwater! This is wasteful and will result in a poorer, less drought tolerant lawn.

For established low maintenance lawns consider allowing the lawn to go dormant in the summer.

Fertilize in late summer or early fall when growth resumes. Overseed then, too, if the lawn thinned during dormancy.

### Use good mowing practices to make your lawn dense and to increase rooting.

Mow high (~3") and follow the "1/3 Rule" (avoid removing more than 1/3 of the grass height with any single mowing event).

Make sure the mower blades are sharp and balanced.

Use a mulching mower and let the clippings remain in the lawn to recycle nutrients and help build the soil. If you return the clippings on a regular basis you will be able to reduce the amount of fertilizer you use over a season.

#### RESOURCES FOR HOME LAWN CARE

[www.capecodextension.org](http://www.capecodextension.org)

<http://ag.umass.edu/topics/home-lawn-garden>

<http://soiltest.umass.edu/>

### Apply fertilizers when grasses are actively growing.

The best time to apply fertilizer is late August to late September, followed by mid- to late spring.




Use no more than 1 lb. of actual nitrogen (N) per 1000 sq ft per application, with an annual maximum of 3.2 lbs. of actual N per 1000 sq ft.

The amount of fertilizer needed may vary from lawn to lawn depending on many factors such as the type of grass, intensity of lawn use, amount of sun and shade, and quality of soil. Many lawns may do well with less than 3.2 lbs. of N per season.

Use a fertilizer that has at least 20% or more of its N in a slow release form.

Use phosphorus (P) containing fertilizers only for new seedings or if a soil test indicates the need. Follow label directions for product application rate and watering in after application.

### Timing is everything!

-  Do not apply fertilizer at these times as turf is generally not actively growing.
-  Fertilizing during these times is acceptable.
-  Fertilizing during these times is acceptable if the lawn is irrigated and fertilizers contain 50-75% or more of the N in a slow release form.

