

## **OVERVIEW**

During storms, rain washes pollutants such as fertilizer, pesticides, herbicides, and even grass clippings from our lawns over our driveways and sidewalks, and into our storm drains, where it flows directly - and untreated - into our rivers, lakes, and streams. Remember, only rain down the drain!

## **MORE INFORMATION**

For more information about ways to prevent stormwater pollution, please visit our website:

[www.mysticriver.org/stormwater](http://www.mysticriver.org/stormwater)



## **GREEN LAWN CARE PRACTICES**



**TIPS FOR KEEPING YOUR LAWN GREEN AND  
YOU WATER CLEAN**

## FERTILIZER & SOIL AMENDMENTS

Phosphorus - commonly found in fertilizers - can cause toxic algae blooms and fish kill. Wondering how to take care of your garden while also protecting our water? Consider the following tips:

- Get a soil test here: [ag.umass.edu/services/soil-plant-nutrient-testing-laboratory/ordering-information-forms](http://ag.umass.edu/services/soil-plant-nutrient-testing-laboratory/ordering-information-forms) and apply fertilizers only as needed
- Use slow-acting and Phosphorus-free fertilizers (the middle number is “0”)
- Follow instructions carefully and do not over-fertilize
- Do not apply fertilizer before a rainstorm



## MOWING YOUR LAWN

Grass clippings that end up in our rivers, lakes, and streams will decompose and release phosphorus into the water, causing fish kill and algae blooms that are toxic to humans and wildlife alike. Looking to keep your lawn healthy while protecting our water? Consider the following tips:

- When you mow, leave the grass clippings where they fall. They will add nutrients to your soil, reducing the need for fertilizer and keeping your lawn healthy!
- Add grass clippings to your compost to be used as a natural fertilizer in your garden.
- Be sure not to blow grass clippings into the street.
- Mow often and mow high! Tall grass shades the soil, thereby conserving water and shading out weeds.
- Water in the early morning so the grass can retain the moisture better. Lawns require one inch of water per week, so use a rain gauge to determine how much water your lawn needs between rainfalls.



## LAWN ALTERNATIVES

Consider replacing some of your lawn with native plants, which better infiltrate water, provide food for wildlife, and stop stormwater pollution. Furthermore, they are much more low-maintenance than lawns!



## PESTICIDES AND HERBICIDES

Consider the following tips when considering pesticides and/ or herbicides for your garden:

- Never apply before a rainstorm, as the chemicals will get washed into our water bodies
- When purchasing products, look for the least toxic or most environmentally friendly options
- Consider natural alternatives such as beneficial insects like ladybugs that eat destructive pests like aphids on your plants.