Are You Near Water?

To prevent a potential negative environmental impact, fertilization of lawns should NOT be done within 15 ft of water bodies (lakes, ponds, streams, etc.)

Maintain an unfertilized strip of grass adjacent to the water to ensure that nutrients applied to your lawn do not move into the water bodies.

Be especially careful as excessive fertilizer or runoff can increase algae blooms (excessive P) . This can upset the water's ecosystem and make undesirable water conditions.

Did You Know...

When it comes to growing a nice, healthy, green lawn, fertilizer is not always the limiting factor.

Here are a few other possibilities...

- ➔ Compaction.
- ➔ Thatch buildup.
- ➔ Amount of Water (too little or too much).
- ➔ Removal of clippings reduces nutrients.

Get the Most From Your Fertilizer

- Leave grass clippings in the lawn to recycle nutrients and reduce fertilization needs.
- Fertilizer should always be swept off sidewalks, driveways, and streets.
- Mow no shorter than 3" to maximize root growth.
- Do not fertilize if chance of rain.
- Store lawn chemicals and fertilizer in a safe, dry, and secure location.

Additional Information

Soil Test Labs

http://www.soilltesting.org/membersadvisors.html

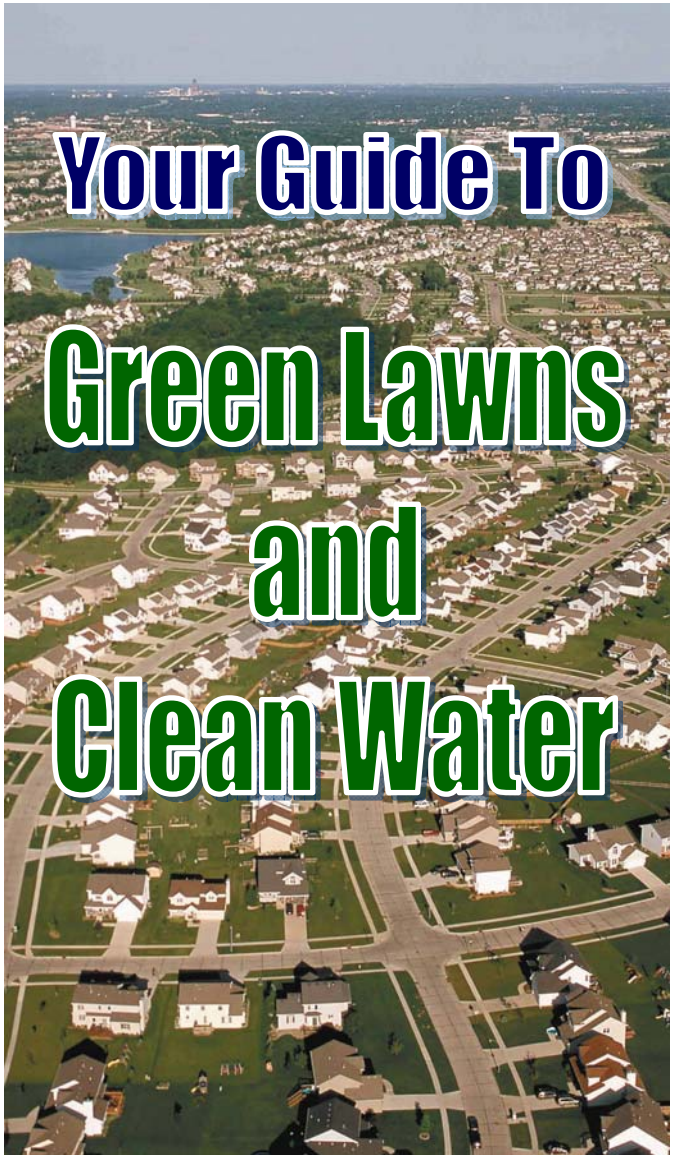
Websites

www.ccswcd.com

www.ght.org/community/brochure-lawnfertilizer.pdf

Contact Info

Champaign County Soil & Water Conservation District
2110 W. Park Court, Suite C
Champaign, IL 61821
Tel: (217)352-3536 Ext. 3
Web: www.ccswcd.com



Your Guide To Green Lawns and Clean Water

Determine the Fertility Needs of Your Lawn Before You Apply Fertilizer.

- ♦ Have a Healthy Yard
- ♦ Save Money
- ♦ Protect Water Quality.

Nutrients

Nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), and potassium (K) are the nutrients most needed by lawns. In some cases, soil acidity (pH) might need adjustment.

Timing

Most fertilizers should be applied in the fall, some in late spring to early summer, and none or very little in the summer. Applying nutrients in the fall promotes a healthy lawn.

Applying high rates of fertilizers, especially N, in the early spring stimulates excessive leaf growth, weakens the roots, promotes disease, encourages pest and weed growth, and forces you to mow more frequently which may cause your lawn to become less attractive.

Nitrogen (N):

Nitrogen is important to promote dark green color and leaf growth. There are no soil tests that accurately predict the need to apply N, thus soil testing for N is not recommended. Keep in mind, the amount and frequency of N application will depend on your level of satisfaction and willingness to devote time to mowing and watering your turf.

- Healthy/Optimal Yard - apply 1 lb of Nitrogen per 1000 ft^2 in September. (approximately the size of a two car garage).
- Optional - In addition to Healthy Yard, apply 1 to 1.25 lb of easily available N in late October to early November and 1 lb of slowly available N in the second half of May.
- Maximum - In addition to the optional treatment above, apply 0.75 lb of slowly available N during the second half of July. Increasing the frequency of N application should be accompanied by more intensive care for the lawn. For instance applying N in July will likely require watering and mowing more often. Increasing fertilizer applications is not a substitute for properly caring for your lawn.

Measure - Know the amount of fertilizer you need by calculating the size of your lawn and reading directions on the fertilizer bag before applying the product. Fertilizer can easily be stored and used later so no need to empty the bag to get rid of it!

Phosphorus (P):

Phosphorus is important for root development in the establishment of new turf. In Illinois, it is unusual to have P deficiency in established lawn, unless soils have a high pH (greater than 7.5).

- If you suspect your soil is P deficient, test your soil. Typically, a maximum of 1 lb of P2O5 per 1000 ft^2 is sufficient to correct P deficiency in most lawns.

Potassium (K):

Potassium is important for healthy development of a lawn and to improve water stress and disease resistance. Potassium is typically at sufficiency levels in most soils in Illinois and an application of 2 lb K_2O per 1000 ft^2 is sufficient to correct K deficiency in most lawns. The exception occurs sometimes in sandy soils that do not retain K. In those soils, smaller and more frequent applications are preferred. As with P, if you suspect K deficiency in your soil, do a soil test.

Soil Tests Are Important! A soil test is necessary to know the condition of your lawn. A soil test will guide you in making economical and environmentally friendly decisions.

If you are establishing a lawn around new construction, a soil test is even more important. Due to the effects of construction, your yard may require more nutrients in the first few years of establishment.

pH:

Soil pH needs to be adjusted to improve lawn growth and increase nutrient availability if it is too high (above 7.5) or too low (below 6.0). Most Illinois soils under a lawn do not need pH adjustment. If the pH is too low, lime with no more than 100 lb agricultural lime per 1000 ft^2. Lime is slow acting, applying it after aeration can help increase the rate of pH change. Soil pH should be re-tested after three years to check change in pH.

Other nutrients:

Lawns need other nutrients such as calcium, magnesium, sulfur, iron, zinc, copper, etc.; these nutrients are typically in sufficient supply in Illinois. If deficiencies are suspected, the best way to test is by sending lawn tissue samples for analysis.

What do the numbers on the bag mean?

27 - 4 - 6

1st # - 27% of the weight represents Nitrogen.

2nd# - 4% of the weight represents available Phosphorus (P205).

3rd # - 6% of the weight represents available Potassium (K20).

How do I calculate the actual fertilizer I need?

Lets say you have 3000 square feet to fertilize (30X100)
You take the desired N rate divided by the N # of the fertilizer times 100.

Example (1/27)x100 = 3.7 Lbs of N
This gave you 3.7 lbs of N per 1000 sq. ft.

To get enough N for 3000 sq. ft
(3.7/1000)X3000 = 11.1 Lbs of Fertilizer

This would mean you would need less then a 1/4 of a 50 lb bag!