



MINNESOTA WATER
LET'S KEEP IT CLEAN

Green up your lawn, not your lakes and rivers

Anything that enters a storm drain goes to a local lake or river.



It does not go to a waste water treatment facility.

Storm drains carry runoff water to local lakes and rivers. Whatever washes off your yard and street can pollute these waters. That includes lawn fertilizer, grass clippings, pet waste, and tree leaves and seeds – all sources of phosphorus, the plant nutrient that turns lakes and rivers green with algae.

**Keep your runoff clean!
Keep our lakes and rivers clean!**

You may be fertilizing more than your grass.

The storm drain in your street is a link to our lakes and rivers.

The choices you make when caring for your lawn directly affect water quality.

A common cause of lake and river pollution is phosphorus runoff.

In response to this, Minnesota has a law restricting the use of phosphorus lawn fertilizer. Although phosphorus is important for grass growth, many lawns have adequate soil phosphorus and do not need further phosphorus fertilization. Under the new law, fertilizers containing phosphorous can only be used on new lawns and in areas where soil tests show that phosphorous is needed.

Phosphorus turns lakes and rivers green.

Phosphorus stimulates the growth of algae in lakes and rivers. This crowds out other water plants and reduces oxygen available to fish. The result is unattractive, foul-smelling water that is bad for fish, wildlife, and humans.

Nitrogen, not phosphorus, greens up grass.

Phosphorus-free lawn fertilizer still contains nitrogen, the plant nutrient that greens up grass.

To keep our lakes and rivers healthy, we need to manage phosphorus carefully. Read on to learn how you can reduce phosphorus runoff from lawn fertilizers and other sources!



Remove leaves from the street

Anything that enters a storm drain goes to a local lake or river.

- Rake leaves, seeds and grass clippings out of the street and gutter.
- Compost on site, bag for collection, or take to community compost program.



Prevent erosion

- Phosphorus attaches to soil. Keep soil from washing into the street.

Fertilize your lawn, not the lakes and rivers

- Choose a zero-phosphorus fertilizer. Many lawns have adequate soil phosphorus and will remain healthy without adding more.
- Mulching grass clippings reduces the need for fertilizers
- If you think your lawn needs phosphorus, test your soil first. For information call INFO-U at 612-624-2200, message 468, or visit soiltest.cfans.umn.edu.
- Sweep spilled fertilizer off paved surfaces.
- Remember, compost and manure contain phosphorus too.



Clean up after pets

- Scoop the poop. Pet waste contains phosphorus as well as harmful bacteria.
- Don't feed the geese.