

Stormwater Pollution Prevention: Grass Clippings and Fertilizers

Distributed by the Town of Marion



The Problem

Grass clippings and fertilizers that use excess nutrients contribute to excess algae growth, which in turn:

- ◆ Threatens human safety
- ◆ Creates unstable fish communities
- ◆ Degrades habitats
- ◆ Impacts recreational opportunities & aesthetics



Sources

Sources of excess nutrients include:

- ◆ Fertilizers
- ◆ Animal Waste
- ◆ Decaying Plants
- ◆ Leaking Septic Tanks

Sources of grass clippings include:

- ◆ Improper disposal (blowing clippings onto hard surfaces, dumping into waterbodies, etc.)



Best Practices

When using fertilizer:

- ◆ Consider using slow-release and phosphorus-free fertilizers
- ◆ Apply fertilizers according to the manufacturer's instructions
- ◆ Do not apply fertilizer on or before windy or rainy days
- ◆ Avoid applying fertilizer close to stormdrains and waterways
- ◆ Do not overwater grass and gardens
- ◆ Fill fertilizer spreaders on a hard-surface so that any spills can be easily cleaned up
- ◆ Properly store unused fertilizers and properly dispose of empty containers

When managing grass clippings and lawn waste:

- ◆ Properly dispose of grass clippings and lawn waste (consider composting)
- ◆ Re-apply yard clippings or mow without a bag to provide a natural fertilizer for lawns
- ◆ Do not dispose in waterbodies or the storm drain!
- ◆ Mow the lawn frequently so no more than 1/3 of the top of the grass is removed