A Healthy Lawn for Healthy Water

How can you grow a green lawn and protect our lakes, rivers, and streams?

Fertilizer and grass clippings easily find their way into drains, which can lead to algae blooms in rivers and lakes.

KEEP FERTILIZER AND LAWN CLIPPINGS ON THE LAWN

Sweep or blow fertilizer and grass clippings back onto the lawn and not into the street to prevent them from getting into storm drains and ditches. Don't dump lawn clippings into drains or ditches.

MOW HIGH AND LEAVE THE CLIPPINGS

Set your mower deck high (three inches) to establish strong, healthy roots and shade out weeds. Leave clippings on your lawn to return nutrients to the soil.

FERTILIZE IN THE FALL

Fall is the best time for plants to absorb nutrients and develop a strong root system.

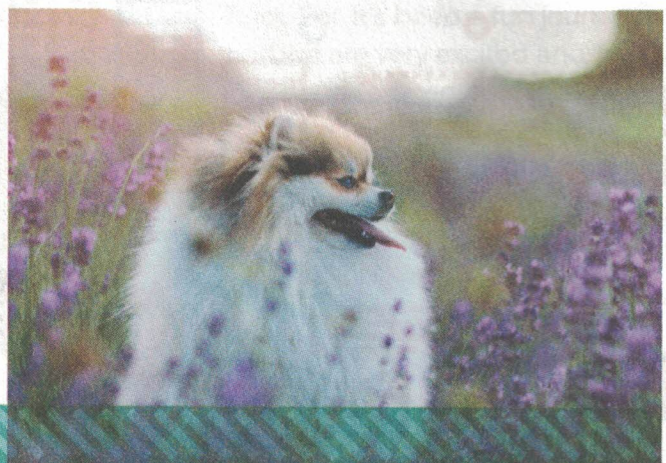
CREATE FERTILIZER-FREE ZONES

Keep a 15-foot buffer along waterfronts in your yard by not fertilizing or just letting the grass grow. A buffer helps to keep grass clippings and fertilizer from getting into the water and causing algae problems.

REDUCE YOUR LAWN AREA

Making your lawn smaller by creating more planting areas with native plants will help infiltrate more water and reduce the amount getting into the storm system.

Check out Michigan Green Industry Association's endorsed companies for the Healthy Lawn Care Program for Watershed Protection. For more information on ways to protect our watershed, visit www.semcog.org.



Proper Disposal of Pet Waste

Pet waste contains bacteria that are harmful to us and our local waterways. Leaving it on the sidewalk or lawn means harmful bacteria will be transported into the storm drains and then into our rivers. It is highly encouraged that all residents clean up after their pet. Many public places contain a number of signs, bag dispensers, and receptacles which have been conveniently installed to encourage pet waste removal.

Dispose of pet waste promptly in the trash or down the toilet where it will be properly treated. Refrain from feeding waterfowl. Feeding ducks and geese may seem harmless; however, it can be harmful to our water. Excess fecal matter in lakes, streams, and ponds can create unnaturally high populations of unwanted vegetation that cause problems for aquatic organisms.