

Think You're Only Fertilizing the Lawn?

THINK AGAIN...

Protect the Yough and Mon River Watersheds

www.fayettecd.org



You fertilize the lawn. Then it rains. The rain washes the fertilizer along the curb, into the storm drain and into the Youghiogheny and Monongahela Rivers. This causes algae to grow, which uses up oxygen that fish need to survive. So, if you fertilize, please follow directions and use sparingly.



Funded by **Growing Greener**

Special thanks to:

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection;
The Washington Department of Ecology, King County;
The cities of Bellevue, Seattle and Tacoma;
The Philadelphia Water Department;
and the Partnership for the Delaware Estuary, Inc.

We All Live Downstream...Help clean-up the Yough & Mon River Watersheds!

It's up to all of us to make it happen. In recent years, "point sources" of water pollution like industrial wastes from factories have been greatly reduced. Now the number one water pollution problem comes from "non-point sources," things like cars leaking oil, fertilizers washing off fields, lawns & gardens, & failing septic tanks. All these sources add up to a big pollution problem but if each of us does some small things to help, it will add up to a ***pollution solution!***

Why do we need clean water?

Clean water is of vital importance for our health, economy & environment. Each of us benefits daily from clean water & each of us have an important role in protecting our waterways both now & in the future. The Youghiogheny & Monongahela Rivers provide us with recreation, fish & wildlife habitat, drinking water & commercial opportunities not to mention being the strong hold of our beautiful landscape. By keeping our lakes, rivers, ground waters & wetlands clean, we ensure our own healthy & happy existence.

What's the problem with fertilizer?

Fertilizer isn't a problem ***if*** it's used properly. If you use too much fertilizer or apply it at the wrong time, it can easily wash off your field, lawn or garden into storm drains & flow untreated into lakes or streams. Just like in your garden, fertilizer in lakes & streams makes plants grow resulting in extra algae & aquatic plant growth. Too much algae harms water quality & makes boating, fishing & swimming unpleasant. As algae decay, they use up oxygen in the water that fish & other wildlife need to survive.

What can I do?

- Use fertilizers sparingly – lawns/plants don't need as much fertilizer as you think. Test your soil to be sure.
- Consider using organic fertilizers; they release nutrients more slowly.
- Compost is a great way to add nutrients to your lawn/garden while putting yard waste to good use! Commercial compost is available at most greenhouses or home improvement stores & may also be available from your solid waste or wastewater utility.
- Don't fertilize before a rain storm & don't fertilize your sidewalks & driveways.
- Don't bag the grass - let your grass clippings lay! Use a mulching lawn mower to cut one-third of the blade length each week & naturally fertilize your lawn in the process.
- Wash your spreader equipment on a pervious/penetrable area, like the lawn, to allow for the natural absorption of excess fertilizer.
- Maintain a buffer strip of un-mowed, natural vegetation bordering waterways to trap excess fertilizers & sediment from fields, lawns & gardens.

For more information:

For more information on fertilizing alternatives & composting, call the Penn State Cooperative Extension Office at (724) 438-0111 or the Fayette County Conservation District at (724) 438-4497.

Additional information can be found on the following websites:
www.fayettecd.org, www.dep.state.pa.us, www.epa.gov and/or www.stormwatercenter.net.



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