

Rainwater runoff can carry fertilizers from your lawn into lakes and streams, where it **promotes the growth of** harmful and smelly **algae**. Starting with your lawn, you can **do your part to help protect our local water resources!**

Turf Grass Tips for Clean Water

- 1. Apply the correct amount of fertilizer.** A simple soil test will tell you about the current makeup of your soil and where your lawn might need improvement. A basic test only costs \$20 and you will receive fertilizer recommendations based on your test results. Visit the U of M Soil Testing website for more information at: <http://soiltest.cfans.umn.edu>.
- 2. Follow the Law.** It is against the law to apply phosphorus fertilizer to existing lawns. The middle number on your fertilizer bag should read **zero** (example: 22-0-15). Sweep and collect excess fertilizer from hard surfaces to minimize fertilizer runoff from your yard. Find more information about the phosphorus lawn fertilizer, check out: www.mda.state.mn.us/phoslaw.
- 3. Throw short grass clippings back onto your lawn.** Grass clippings contain phosphorus, the plant nutrient that turns our lakes green with algae. By tossing *short* grass clippings back onto your lawn, nutrients can be added back into the soil after they break down, instead of into the street and down the storm drain.
- 4. Keep your lawn at 3 inches in height.** This will keep your lawn healthier and stronger over the dry periods of summer because taller grass height promotes deeper root systems and discourages weed growth. In addition, you will water less, and save money on your water bill.
- 5. Water without waste.** The wee hours of the morning (4am-8am) are the best for watering your lawn. Less water is lost to evaporation in the early morning because temperatures are lower and the sun is less intense. Also, while watering, check to make sure that you're not watering hard surfaces (causing runoff) or creating pools of water on the lawn (applying too much, too quickly).
- 6. Go Native!** Contact the Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District (PLSLWD) or the Scott Soil and Water Conservation District for ideas on how to reduce your impact to local lakes, rivers and wetlands. Raingardens and shoreline restoration are just two examples of water quality practices that help to reduce stormwater runoff. Visit our website at: www.plslwd.org for more information.

