

# Stormwater Friendly Lawn Care

City of Belmont

Stormwater Management "Keep it clean, we all live downstream"

## How you take care of your lawn affects our water supply



With Spring already here and Summer on its way, it's time to get our lawns ready for Summer. In doing so, we have to add fertilizers and nutrients to harvest a lush green landscape capable of withstanding the Summer tempera-

tures and dry conditions. So what does lawn care have to do with stormwater? A lot! What fertilizers and nutrients your lawn does not absorb are washed away during a rain event. The excess fertilizer and nutrients wash to stormdrains, then streams, and end up in the Catawba (our water supply) or South Fork Rivers. Excess nutrients in surface waters can harm aquatic life and habitat, cause algal blooms, and affect human health. Remember stormwater is **NOT** treated before it reaches our water supplies. Read on for stormwater friendly lawn care tips and guidelines.

### Get a free soil test:

Find out exactly what your lawn already has and what it needs before applying fertilizer and nutrients. Gaston County Natural Resources and the NC State Co-op Extension Service, both in Dallas, NC, offer free soil test kits. You only have to pay the shipping fees. Click here for more information:

[www.agr.state.nc.us/agronomi](http://www.agr.state.nc.us/agronomi)

### What type of spreader to use:

Be sure to use a drop-spreader instead of a broadcast spreader. The drop-spreader ensures that you only fertilize the lawn and not the sidewalks and streets where the fertilizer is washed down the storm drains and into surface waters.

### Correct amounts of fertilizer:

Once you've received your free soil test report you'll know the exact type and quantity of fertilizer and nutrients you'll need to turn your grass green. If you chose not to have a free soil test done, be sure to follow the manufacturer's application instructions. Applying more is not always best; you could be wasting fertilizer, and the excess is washed away during and after a rain event.

### When to fertilize:

Never apply fertilizer directly before a rain event. It just gets washed away because the soil doesn't have enough time to absorb the fertilizer. Apply during a dry spell ensuring adequate time for the fertilizer to work before the next rain event.

## More Lawn Care Tips:

Do not cut your lawn too short. Keep it cut to a minimum of 3-4 inches. Mowing too short destabilizes your lawn and can cause erosion and bare spots.

Leave grass clippings on your lawn to act as a natural fertilizer and soil conditioner. You can also mulch/compost clippings and apply to flowerbeds as a natural fertilizer.

If you prefer, bag your grass clippings and place bags at the back of the curb for pick up. Do not blow or sweep grass clippings into the street or storm drains.



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