



HEALTHY LAWNs - CLEAN WATER INITIATIVE

Properly managed lawns keep our waterways cleaner.

5 STEPS FOR A NATURAL LAWN

Improper lawn care pollutes water bodies with nitrogen and phosphorus. Follow these tips to be lawncare smart.

1

PLANT NATIVES

They require less water and maintenance.

2

MOW HIGHER

Set mower blades at 3" for more vigorous roots.

3

LET CLIPPINGS LIE

Clippings are high quality, free fertilizer.

4

HEALTHY SOIL?

Test your soil for pH and organic matter.

5

WATER WISELY

Lawns only need 1" of water per week from rain and/or irrigation.



KNOW YOUR LAWN'S NEEDS

TEST YOUR SOIL

Mature lawns often need a pH adjustment, not chemicals. Testing your soil is the first step in providing your lawn with the proper nutrients that it needs to maximize the potential of the growth of your lawn.

This step, while arguably the most important, is the one that is most commonly ignored.

Soil testing provides you with the pH, phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium, and lead levels of your soil. The correct soil pH level is needed for your plants to access the nutrients that they need to grow.

Unnecessary fertilizer does not get used by your lawn and can make its way into our waterways.

Contact UNH Cooperative Extension to test your soil.

CHOOSE FERTILIZER WISELY

NOTE: Applying fertilizer is prohibited in some areas of town (see zoning ordinance 9.1.7 and 9.3.4.F). When outside those areas, if a soil test indicates you need fertilizer, choose the correct product. Understanding the numbers on a fertilizer bag is essential to properly apply fertilizer. Making sure you get the right fertilizer for your lawn can prevent excess nutrient runoff from your property.

Understanding Garden Fertilizer Labels



Nitrogen (N):

- Encourages foliage growth
- This bag contains 5% N by weight
- In a 10-lb bag of 5-10-5 fertilizer, there is 0.5 lb of nitrogen

Phosphorous (P):

- Contributes to rooting and setting flower buds
- This bag contains 10% P by weight
- In a 10-lb bag of 5-10-5 fertilizer, there is 1 lb of phosphorous

Potassium (K):

- Contributes to the overall plant health
- This bag contains 5% K by weight
- In a 10-lb bag of 5-10-5 fertilizer, there is 0.5 lb of potassium



KNOW YOUR LAWN'S NEEDS

APPLY FERTILIZER PROPERLY

Fertilizer should never be applied on hard ground, steep slopes, before a storm event, or in amounts greater than your lawn needs. If using a fertilizer spreader, calibrating your spreader correctly ensures the proper amount is applied and is a key step for keeping excess nutrients out of our waterways. Bonus: You'll also save money by not wasting purchased fertilizer.



For more information on how and why you would want to calibrate your spreader visit:

<https://hubs.ly/Q01KqB-s0>

LAWNCARE AND WEATHER

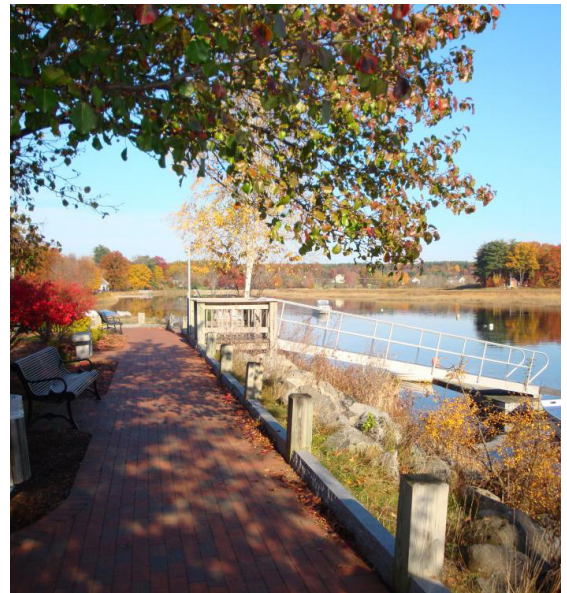
Pollution runoff happens when water flows across developed land, collecting dirt, debris and chemicals and transfers it to a nearby waterbody directly or through storm drains. Reducing irrigation and conserving rainwater can reduce pollution runoff from your lawn. Lawns only need 1" of water per week from rain or irrigation. Be sure to measure soil moisture before watering. Rain barrels collect rainwater allowing you to use it when your lawn or garden is dry. Slowing runoff by installing areas where it can soak in also helps. Common practices include:

- Pervious walkways
- Driveway infiltration trench
- Reducing impervious areas
- Rain garden

GROW NATIVE PLANTS

Recover your free time! Converting portions of lawn to native plants or meadows can be a tremendous benefit for local water quality. They require less water, improve habitat for wildlife and pollinators, air quality, and most importantly takes less of your time to maintain-giving you more time to kick-back and enjoy the summer! Consider adding native plants that are known to withstand drought, heat, and drier soil conditions. The less water your lawn needs the less likely chemicals from lawn care will make its way to waterbodies. Some plants to consider include:

- Little bluestem
- Purple love grass
- Switch grass
- Gray birch
- Common juniper
- Sweet Pepperbush
- Sweet fern



For more information about Exeter's Healthy Lawns – Clean Water Initiative visit:
<https://hubs.ly/Q01KqCzk0>



For more information about the University of New Hampshire Extension's soil testing services visit:
<https://hubs.ly/Q01KqDgb0>