

A HEALTHY “GREEN” LAWN CAN HELP BARNEGAT BAY



HEALTHY LAWNS WHICH ARE PROPERLY FERTILIZED AND MAINTAINED HELP TO REDUCE POLLUTANTS WASHING INTO OUR LOCAL RIVERS, CREEKS, WETLANDS, AND BARNEGAT BAY. THEY ALSO HELP TO PUT RAIN WATER BACK INTO THE GROUND TO REPLENISH OUR DRINKING WATER SUPPLY.

LEARN HOW YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE WITH YOUR LAWN.

HERE IS SOME SIMPLE INFORMATION TO HELP YOU MAINTAIN A BEAUTIFUL GREEN LAWN AND IMPROVE THE BARNEGAT BAY WATERSHED.

SOIL TESTING! Soil testing is critical to establish a new lawn, maintain an existing lawn, and renovate a damaged lawn. Inexpensive soil test kits (\$20) are available at the Rutgers Cooperative Extension in Toms River and will tell you what nutrients your lawn needs and how much to apply.

FERTILIZER SELECTION! USE ONLY FERTILIZERS LABELLED FOR LAWNS. DO NOT USE “ALL-PURPOSE” OR GARDEN FERTILIZERS (e.g., 10-10-10) ON YOUR LAWN. Bags of fertilizer have three numbers on them. These numbers represent the percentages of major nutrients contained in the fertilizer (nitrogen-phosphorus-potassium). Unless indicated by a soil test, most lawns in Ocean County do not need fertilizers with high percentages (>2%) of phosphorus. Also, look for fertilizer products with slow release nitrogen (represented as WIN on the bag) or organic nitrogen (represented as DON on the bag) – these generally break down and release nitrogen slowly to the lawn over a longer period of time.

WHEN TO FERTILIZE! APPLY FERTILIZER IN SPRING (AFTER THE FIRST LAWN CUTTING) WHEN YOUR GRASS IS GROWING ENOUGH TO BE MOWED. Avoid mowing and fertilizing when your lawn is stressed (e.g., hot weather). Fertilize again in the early fall, **before mid-October**, and you’ll have a healthier, greener lawn next spring. Application of fertilizer later in the fall is not absorbed by lawns in our watershed; instead it runs off in stormwater. This wastes fertilizer and money!

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- “Best Management Practices for Nutrient Management of Turf in New Jersey,” Bulletin E327, Rutgers University, New Jersey Agriculture Experiment Station
- Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Ocean County, (732) 349-1247, <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/garden/>.
- Soil Test Information on the Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station, <http://njaes.rutgers.edu/soiltestinglab/>.

PROPER APPLICATION! FERTILIZER SHOULD NOT BE APPLIED PRIOR TO A HEAVY OR EXTENDED RAIN. Heavy rains will wash fertilizers off of your lawn and into nearby waterways where it will eventually flow to Barnegat Bay and contribute to the bay’s nutrient over-enrichment. Irrigating lightly after fertilizer application will promote nutrient uptake by the lawn.

ALWAYS SWEEP UP FERTILIZER THAT HAS ACCIDENTALLY BEEN SPREAD ONTO HARD SURFACES SUCH AS DRIVEWAYS AND SIDEWALKS. Fertilizer inadvertently left on hard surfaces will wash down a stormdrain if not swept up. Calibrate the fertilizer spreader properly to avoid misplacement; use a drop spreader near the street, sidewalks, and driveway; and clean the spreader over the lawn, not on a driveway or sidewalk.

MOW YOUR LAWN AT THE HIGHEST MOWER SETTING AND LEAVE THE GRASS CLIPPINGS ON THE LAWN. Mowing high allows the grass to develop a deep root system that retains and uses water efficiently. Returning clippings to the lawn instead of bagging them recycles nutrients and moisture back into the soil, which reduces the need to apply fertilizers and water!

THIS INFORMATION WAS BROUGHT TO YOU BY SENATOR CONNORS, ASSEMBLYMAN RUMPF, AND ASSEMBLYWOMAN GOVE OF THE NEW JERSEY LEGISLATIVE DISTRICT 9, WITH SUPPORT FROM THE BARNEGAT BAY PARTNERSHIP.

