Help Protect and Preserve Water Quality in Larimer County

Use Phosphorus Free Fertilizer

The phosphorus problem

Sure we all want a green healthy lawn, but how we get there matters. Increased **phosphorus** in our waters causes algae to grow faster than ecosystems can handle. Significant increases in algae harms water quality and aquatic habitats, and decreases the oxygen that fish and other aquatic life need to survive. **Phosphorous** pollution washes off lawns with stormwater generated from rain and overwatering. That stormwater makes its way, untreated, to our lakes, streams and rivers through the street storm-drainage systems or through the roadside swale system.

What fertilizers do I use?

Look for lawn fertilizers with zero phosphorus in them. On the bag or box of fertilizer is a row of three numbers. The numbers indicate the amount of total nitrogen (**N**), available phosphorous ($\mathbf{P}_2O_5$) and soluble potash ($\mathbf{K}_2O$) in the particular product. The middle number is available phosphate and should read "0"

Where can I find phosphorus free fertilizers?

The majority of local garden centers, hardware stores, and large chain stores carry phosphorus free lawn fertilizers. Just ask at your local retailer.

Are there instances when I should apply phosphorus?

The general rule is that most lawns have plenty of organic matter that provides all the phosphorus your lawn needs. If in doubt test your soil. To learn what nutrients might be missing use a test kit to measure the three key components important for healthy growth **N**itrogen, **P**hosphorous and **K**-Potassium, as well test the soil **pH**. You can then make the appropriate adjustments using soil amendments.

LARIMER COUNTY

For more information on how you can improve stormwater quality visit the Larimer County Water Quality Program web page at:

https://www.larimer.gov/engineering/stormwater-drainage/stormwater-quality