

# Lawn Care

## LAWN CARE TIPS

- Set your lawn blade to its highest setting. A high cut (3") encourages deeper roots. Increasing the grass height only 1/8 inch results in about 300 square feet more of leaf surface for each 100 square feet of lawn. More leaf surface enables grass to generate more energy for healthy growth, especially of roots. Taller grass shades out weeds, limits moisture evaporation from soil and harbors beneficial insects which control pests. Cut the lawn often enough so that you remove no more than 1/3 of the blade at one time. This means more frequent mowings in the spring, fewer in the heat of summer.
- Leave your grass clippings as you mow. Clippings provide nutrition for your lawn. They are comprised of water, organic matter, nitrogen, and a small amount of phosphorous – all things your grass needs. Because clippings supply up to 50% of a lawn's nitrogen needs over the season, you will not need as much fertilizer. Clippings from regular mowings will NOT cause thatch build up and will not hurt the grass.
- Do not dump yard waste (clippings, branches or leaves) in the street where it can wash into storm drains, or in parks, along streams, or piled at the base of trees (and, as the Township Roadmaster notes, do not dump into any township outfalls: discharge storm water pipes).

*Source: Penn State Cooperative Extension; compiled by Chester-Ridley-Crum Watersheds Association*

## KEEP OUR CREEKS CLEAN!

### Yard Maintenance Can Impact Water Quality

Lawn care, landscaping, and pest control practices are major contributors to storm water pollution. Rain flows across yards, rooftops, paved areas, and picks up dirt, leaves, grass clippings, garden chemicals, and anything else in its path. Then this polluted water flows directly into the storm drain system.

utrients and other chemicals from yard waste can cause excessive algae growth and toxin production. Algae can rob the organisms that live in our streams from the oxygen they need to survive, not to mention killing fish along the way. You can make a difference!

### Lawn Care

- Mow your lawn so no more than one-third of the length of the grass is removed.

- Leave the grass blades on the lawn or compost.
- Sweep grass on all paved areas back on the lawn.
- Only spot treat for weeds or not at all.
- Compost yard waste or participate in municipal collection or drop-off.

## **Watering**

- Do not over water. Excessive runoff wastes both water and chemicals you may have added to your yard.
- Direct downspouts to a depressed area or a garden bed so the water soaks into your yard instead of rushing out to the street.

## **Fertilizing**

- Fertilize only when necessary or not at all. Have your soil tested before you apply!  
<http://www.soiltestinglab.colostate.edu/>
- Do not fertilize if the forecast calls for rain in the next day or two.

## **Yard Design**

- Consider installing a rain garden or a rain water barrel and directing your roof drains to it.
- Incorporate swales and berms to your landscape so runoff is contained and doesn't leave your yard.
- Consider using bricks, flagstone, gravel, and other porous materials instead of impervious surfaces, such as sidewalks and driveways.
- Add trees and shrubs to capture and hold rainwater before it can reach the ground.

## **Irrigation Ditches and Creek Areas**

- Keep a mowing and fertilizing buffer around ditches and creeks so that erosion and nutrient loading are minimized.

## **Exterior Cleaning**

- Use dry cleanup methods, such as a broom and dust pan or leaf blower whenever possible
- If you must use water, divert it to landscaping where it can infiltrate.