

Douglas and Sarpy Counties

Caring For Your Lawn Without Harming A Metro Lake

A well managed lawn helps to protect the environment, adds beauty to the home landscape and provides a great place for family activities. A healthy lawn is made up of thousands of grass plants capable of absorbing certain air pollutants, intercepting chemicals and fertilizers, protecting soil from washing away, and releasing oxygen into our air.



The improper or excessive use of lawn care chemicals can potentially pollute our lakes and threaten the health of people, pets and wildlife. When it rains, excess chemicals can be washed from lawns, driveways, sidewalks and streets into the city lakes by way of watershed storm drains. Since watershed storm drains empty directly into lakes; whatever washes into the street will also enter the city lakes.

WHATEVER GOES INTO THE STORM DRAIN, TRAVELS DIRECTLY INTO THE LAKES.

Lawn Care Tips for Protecting the Metro Lakes

- Fertilize your lawn and garden based on soil test results.
- Before making pesticide and fertilizer applications, check the weather forecast. Make applications when a heavy rain isn't likely to wash the pesticide or fertilizer into streets and storm drains. Read and follow product label instructions.
- Apply pesticides on an "as needed" basis. Make an accurate diagnosis of the insect, weed, or disease pest causing the damage before making a pesticide application. Make spot applications when possible instead of broadcast applications.
- Apply pesticides according to instructions on the label. Don't guess about proper measurements when mixing pesticides and don't use more than labeled rates thinking the killing action will be stronger or work faster.
- Use non-chemical pest management practices whenever possible.
- Collect litter and animal waste before they wash into storm drains.
- Recycle grass clippings. By returning the grass clippings to the lawn, you can supply 25% of the turf's fertilizer requirement.
- Use a slow release nitrogen fertilizer especially in the spring. Ask your garden center staff to help you select a slow release nitrogen fertilizer.
- Water in early morning when evaporation losses are the lowest. Do not water in the evening because night watering encourages disease development.
- Avoid frequent, light watering applications in spring and fall.
- Maintain a dense, healthy lawn that will help to reduce weed problems and the need for pesticide applications.
- Try not to get fertilizer and pesticide on the driveway, sidewalk or street, but if you do, use a broom to collect spills and apply to the lawn area.
- Pull weeds by hand when practical.
- Do not pour leftover pesticides or fertilizers on the street or down the storm drain.

Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Elbert C. Dickey, Director of Cooperative Extension, University of Nebraska, Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln not to discriminate on the basis of gender, age, disability, race, color, religion, marital status, veteran's status, national or ethnic origin or sexual orientation.