

WHEN YOU TREAT THE LAWN

REMEMBER

YOU'RE NOT JUST

TREATING THE LAWN.



You treat the lawn. Then it rains. Runoff carries fertilizers and pesticides into our lakes, streams, Puget Sound and other marine waters. That's bad news for fish and other aquatic life.

**Treat with care.
Right dose at the right time.**

A message from the Washington Departments of Ecology, Health, Washington Parks & Recreation Commission, Washington Conservation Commission, Puget Sound Partnership, WSU Extension, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Thurston County Stream Team.



When you treat the lawn, remember you're not just treating the lawn.

Many people use fertilizers, weed killers and pesticides to enhance their yards and gardens.

But if you use too much of these products or apply them at the wrong time, runoff can easily carry them from your lawn or garden into storm drains and ditches. From there they can end up in lakes, streams, Puget Sound and other marine waters.

Weed killers and pesticides are designed to kill plants and animals. However, when they get into our waters, they can kill plants and animals that are not a problem. Fish and amphibians are vulnerable to these chemicals.

Like in the garden, fertilizer in lakes and streams makes plants grow. But too much algae and other aquatic plant growth can make boating, fishing and swimming unpleasant. What's more, as the algae and other plants decay, they use up the oxygen in the water that fish and other aquatic life need.

Lawn and garden care doesn't have to be a problem. What will you do to help?

- ◆ Read the label. Follow the instructions.
- ◆ Use fertilizer sparingly. Many plants don't need as much as you might think. Too much can even harm them. Also, roots, leaves and fruits need different nutrients. Test your soil to find the right dose and type to match the your plants' needs.
- ◆ Don't treat your lawn or garden right before a rainstorm.
- ◆ Use slow-release fertilizers and other more environmentally friendly products.
- ◆ Try non-chemical alternatives. Use compost. Plant companion plants that deter pests. Pull weeds by hand. Use mulch. Trade lawn for native groundcover or shrubs.
- ◆ Get expert advice about lawn and garden products from Master Gardeners at your county WSU Extension office.

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We all need clean water.

We drink it, fish in it, play in it. We enjoy all it adds to our lives. In fact, we need it to survive. Fish and wildlife do, too.

More than 60 percent of water pollution comes from things like cars leaking oil, fertilizers and pesticides from farms and gardens, failing septic tanks, pet waste, and fuel spills from recreational boaters.

All these small, dispersed sources add up to a big pollution problem. But each of us can do small things to help clean up our waters too—and that adds up to a pollution solution!

Bonus points!

Using fertilizers and pesticides sparingly also helps you:

- ◆ Save money.
- ◆ Make yards safer places to play.
- ◆ Support a healthy watershed.

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