

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Best Management Practices for Healthy Lawns that Protect Long Island Sound

FERTILIZER



Don't use it all if you don't need it. The only way to know if you need fertilizer is to get a soil test:

<http://soiltest.uconn.edu/sampling.php>

FERTILIZER

Apply only if needed, only what is needed, to where it is needed, at reduced rates, never on hard surfaces or before a big rain...

Apply one half to one third less fertilizer than recommended; maximum 2lbs per 1000 ft² for a lawn that is 10 years or older; up to 3lb/1000 ft² <10 yrs. old.



SOUND GARDENING

Consider adding white clover; it's a good source of nitrogen for lawns.

"Grass-cycle" - leave your clippings on the lawn. 46% to 59% of applied nitrogen ends up in clippings, reducing the need for more added nitrogen by 25% - 40%.

Apply no more than twice a year: after spring green-up and no later than October 15th. The best one time application is mid-September through mid October.

Slow release fertilizers are best (they feed the soil).

Organic is preferable to petroleum-based inorganics...

HEALTHY SOIL



Healthy soil buffers grass from heat and drought stress.

Feed the soil to sustain the plants: Add **compost** (organic material - between 3-5% is ideal).

Maintain pH levels between 6.0 - 6.5.

Source: *New England Regional Nitrogen & Phosphorus Fertilizer and Associated Management Practice Recommendations for Lawns Based on Water Quality Considerations*, University of Connecticut, 2008

...but remember: too much fertilizer is too much fertilizer, whether it's organic or inorganic

Gardening for a Cause – Long Island Sound

Excessive nutrients and chemicals that result, in part, from residential landscaping practices, contribute runoff that is harmful to the nation's estuaries, including Long Island Sound. Adopting even a few of these suggestions can help protect our coastal waters. You CAN make a DIFFERENCE!



longislandsoundstudy.net/
www.seagrants.uconn.edu/

PROBLEM PREVENTION



Mow high (3") to keep grass roots strong. When starting or reseeding a lawn, introduce hearty varieties (such as fescues) that have lower nitrogen and water demands. Too much nitrogen increases disease problems, lowers tolerance to temperature variations, increases the need for moisture, and can contribute to thatch.

WATER SMART

To prevent leaching, don't overwater: 1" – 1.5" of water a week; early morning hours are best. Water deeply and infrequently, and water the lawn separately from other landscaping.



PESTICIDES

Be certain that a pesticide is needed. Don't use weed & feed products – one size does **not** fit all. Area treatment vs. broadcast application is best. Use cultural practices (pulling, squishing) or alternative treatments (such as vinegar, or flame). Plant native plants that are adapted to local conditions. Pesticides kill the beneficial soil organisms that keep thatch in check.

ALTERNATIVES

How much lawn do you need?

Reduce your active lawn area in favor of native plant borders and beds that attract wildlife, help diminish pollution and provide habitat for important insect pollinators. Accept a little damage: only 5% – 25% of bugs are pests in the yard.



FOR MORE INFORMATION contact Judy Preston, Long Island Sound Study Connecticut Outreach Coordinator: judy.preston@uconn.edu, or visit Sound Gardening at LongIslandSoundStudy.net