

# FERTILIZER GUIDELINES

## Green Lawns and Healthy Lakes

We maintain the value of our properties by having an attractively landscaped lot and by being in a community with clean streets and lakes. We may be our own worst enemies! Some like a lush lawn, a clean car and want to swim and fish in and boat on our lakes. Unfortunately most of our fertilizers and driveway car washes contain phosphorus which (together with water soluble nitrogen) creates ideal conditions for algae and common water plants such as bladderwort and pondweed. These spoil the lake and then decay to rob the fish of oxygen!

The environmental committee wants to help us have an attractive lot and clean lakes. It is easier if owners follow the general guidelines given below but this is not always possible. So to support a healthy lawn we looked for compatible fertilizers and developed some guidelines overleaf which we believe provide a reasonable compromise solution to the problem and meet the spirit of the Restrictive Covenants of the Association. Give them a try and help us find out how they work!

### General Guidelines for Residents

Lakefront owners should maintain a buffer zone of unmanaged (unfertilized) grasses or natural vegetation around the shoreline.

All home owners should try to clear their street gutters of plant residues once a week. The township only does it 4 times a year.

In general control soil erosion by using natural ground covers like such as ivy and myrtle rather than lawn grasses. Be advised that wood chip does not reduce soil erosion but makes the beds look good and more beds mean a reduction in the overall size of the lawn. Remember 24 % of your area is the maximum lawn size permitted by the covenants.

Use a drought resistant low fertilizer grass such the Rebel II fescue (available in sod) which the association uses on the dams. Set the mower up to 3-4 inches to choke out weeds and leave clippings on the lawn as fertilizer.

### Fertilizer Choices

We sought a slow release granular lawn fertilizer - that is one with a high percentage of water insoluble nitrogen (WIN of 40-80%) and near zero phosphorus. The commercial ones (e.g. Scotts) were fast acting "greeners" so had too low a WIN content. The organic ones such as Turf Tone had high phosphorus. At our request S. J. Farmers Exchange blended Professional Turf Food and for 3 years it was available at Green Lea on Rte 73. It gave mixed results so we are not asking for it to be made this year.

**Sturbridge Lakes**  
Association

