

New Jersey's Fertilizer Law

HOW-TO GUIDE FOR:

Healthy Lawns *and* Clean Water

Resources:

- www.anjec.org
- NJDEP Healthy Lawns, Healthy Water
www.nj.gov/dep/healthylawnshealthywater/
- Rutgers Cooperative Extension
Water Resources Program Water.rutgers.edu
- Rutgers Fertilizer Law FAQs
[https://ocean.njaes.rutgers.edu/ag/documents/
NJFertilizerLaw2011.pdf](https://ocean.njaes.rutgers.edu/ag/documents/NJFertilizerLaw2011.pdf)
- Soil testing service from Rutgers
njaes.rutgers.edu/soil-testing-lab/
- Rutgers professional fertilizer application
certification profact.rutgers.edu/Pages/default.aspx



*New Jersey's
Fertilizer Law,
enacted in 2011,
is about protecting
clean water.*

*It's designed to
help you feed your lawn
while reducing polluted
runoff that harms local
streams and rivers.*



Clean water sustains life for all of us. A great place to begin protecting water is in your own yard.

The rainwater that falls on our lawns and gardens picks up chemicals from fertilizers. Rain transports those chemicals into streams, often into our drinking water.

Fertilizers cause "blooms" of algae and plants in local streams, algae eventually die off and get consumed by bacteria. The bacteria deplete oxygen in the water, causing fish kills and water pollution. Overuse of organic and conventional fertilizers create the same problems.



What the Law requires of residents:

- At least 20 percent of nitrogen in lawn fertilizers must be a slow-release variety.
- Do not apply fertilizers within 25 feet of a waterway.
- Avoid applying lawn fertilizer when rain is falling or predicted.
- Never apply fertilizer when the ground is frozen or at times when the ground typically cannot absorb nutrients, specifically from November 15 to March 1.
- Professional lawn care providers may not apply fertilizer from December 1 through March 1.



Poor watering practices can do more harm to your lawn than good. Excess water can carry pollutants out of your yard and into waterways

- Most lawns need about 1 inch of water per week.
- Reduce or eliminate watering based on rainfall amounts.
- Don't apply water faster than the soil can absorb it.
- Adjust sprinklers to avoid runoff, use smart control sprinklers.

Green Lawns with Less Fertilizer

- Monitor lawn and address problems quickly. Treat only problems that exist and use natural or mechanical controls when possible.
- Consider converting part (or all!) of your lawn to natural landscaping, using native plants that will save money, time and the environment.
- Aerate the soil before seeding.
- Consider drought tolerant species of grass when adding new lawn or reseeding.
- Use a mulching mower.
- Test your soil before treatment to determine needed chemicals/levels – if any.
- Sweep up loose fertilizer or chemicals. Don't hose it down the drain or to the street!
- Spread compost on lawn as recommended for species of grass.

New Jersey's Native Plants

Native plants have adapted to grow well in the areas where they are naturally found. Over 90 percent of plants rely on pollinators for help.

By using and maintaining native plant gardens, New Jersey residents can entice pollinators of fruit, vegetables and other farmed crops.

Since the decline of honey bee population, providing pollinator habitat is more important than ever.

Activities, expert advice and opportunities to participate in the growing national native plant movement are available – right here in the Garden State.





Native Plants Do's and Don'ts:

- ✓ Do plant native species
- ✓ Do plant pollinator gardens
- ✓ Do plant stream buffers
- ✓ Don't overwater
- ✓ Do use compost

Resources:

- The Native Plant Society of New Jersey is a statewide non-profit organization dedicated to the appreciation, protection, and study of the native flora of New Jersey. Find the best native plants for your yard at: <http://npsnj.org/index.html>
- Jersey Friendly Yards provides details and resources for creating a beautiful landscape. Includes a plant database and an interactive design tool. www.jerseyyards.org
- New Jersey Audubon, provides a native plant database as well as tips for providing habitat for birds and other pollinators. www.njaudubon.org



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