

## **Remember, you're not just fertilizing your lawn...**

Storm drains found in our streets and yards empty into our lakes and streams. So, when we fertilize our lawn we could also be fertilizing our lakes and streams! While fertilizer is good for our lawn, it's bad for our water. Fertilizer that enters our lakes and streams can cause algae to grow and use up oxygen that fish need to survive. So what can you do to help? Simple.

- **Sweep it.** Sweep excess fertilizer and grass clippings from pavement back onto your lawn so that they don't wash into storm drains.
- **Buy low and go slow.** First, find out if you even need fertilizer! Contact your Michigan State University Extension office to get a soil test. If you do need it, choose a fertilizer with no or low phosphorus--phosphorus causes algae growth. You can also use an organic or slow-release nitrogen fertilizer, which causes less harm to water.
- **Hire smart.** Select a lawn care service that follows the practices noted above.
- **Mow high.** Keep your lawn at three inches in height. Taller grass strengthens roots and shades out weeds. Also, remember that the nutrients from grass clippings left on your lawn act as a great fertilizer.
- **Make fertilizer-free zones.** Keep fertilizer at least 20 feet away from the edge of any lakes, streams, or storm drains.

For more easy steps on protecting our lakes and streams, visit [www.semcog.org](http://www.semcog.org). Remember, our water is our future – and it's ours to protect!