

Lawn Care – Application of Fertilizers and Pesticides

Green lawns and bright flowers are beautiful, but what flows from lawns into our St. Louis regional streams can harm local aquatic life and damage the environment. Excess lawn chemicals like common fertilizers, pesticides, insecticides, or herbicides wash away from yards when it rains or if an area is overwatered.

The Metropolitan St. Louis Sewer District offers this advice to help prevent excess chemicals from ending up in our natural waterways.

- Before you use lawn chemicals, test your soil for nutrient deficiencies to learn what chemicals you should use and how much to apply. A soil test is available from the University of Missouri Extension offices around town. Find the closest one to you at <http://extension.missouri.edu>, and click the “Locations” tab at the top of the page.
- Once you know what your lawn may need, read lawn product labels carefully, and when possible, use the minimum amount of products.
- Never sweep fertilizer into the street or leave it on other hard surface areas where it will wash away.

Every little bit of prevention helps! Please do your part to help spare the regions streams from pollutants.

Finally, don't be afraid to try new techniques that avoid chemicals altogether.

- Use compost to augment your soil and fertilize your plants. Dark, earthy and rich in nutrients, compost acts like a fertilizer without the negative side effects.
- Try traps, barriers, fabric row covers and repellants before turning to pesticides.
- Select pest-resistant plants and place them in appropriate soil and sun conditions.

You can help spare the region's streams from pollutants and still have a beautiful yard!