

Protecting the Huron River

Spring

it begins in your yard...



Whenever it rains, water flows over your yard, carrying untreated pollutants like fertilizer and pesticides into our rivers and lakes directly or through the stormdrains.

Here are some steps you can take to keep lawn care pollutants out of the river:

- Wait until the ground is fully thawed to apply fertilizer.
- Use a broom to sweep fertilizer spills on sidewalks back onto your lawn.
- Go phosphorus-free when choosing lawn fertilizer. Most area lawns already have enough and several watershed communities restrict its use.
- Don't guess, soil test. Find the fertilizer best suited for the condition of your soil.
- Consider applying lawn fertilizer only once this year, in the fall.
- Reduce your need for lawn fertilizer altogether by keeping the grass blade 3 inches tall after cutting to promote healthy root growth.
- Leave a "no fertilizer" zone of at least 25 feet from waterways.
- Reduce the size of your lawn by planting deep-rooted native grasses and plants.

Test your soil...

Soil testing determines what nutrients your soil needs for your lawn's optimum health and growth. Michigan State University Extension will test your soil samples for \$15 per sample, **9AM-3PM, on Saturdays throughout April at participating Washtenaw County retailers.**

Go to www.hrwc.org for a PDF of the MSUE Soil Testing Program directions and retailer list.

Put your lawn on a no-phosphorus diet...

These communities in the Huron River watershed restrict the use of manufactured phosphorus fertilizer on turf grass:

- City of Ann Arbor
- Commerce Township
- Hamburg Township
- City of Orchard Lake Village
- Charter Township of Pittsfield
- West Bloomfield
- Charter Township of Ypsilanti
- City of Ypsilanti

Check out www.hrwc.org or your community's website for more information.

Try a native plant or two in your garden...

Native plants have deep, "thirsty" roots that help retain water on your site and filter out the pollutants in runoff. They help stabilize soils and prevent erosion. Try just one in your garden this summer:



- For shady areas -- **wild geranium** is a great choice -- nice flower, foliage stays around all year, pretty fall color.
- For sunnier spots -- **penstemon digitalis** (beardstongue) in well-draining soil -- it is relatively short, has a good season of bloom time in early summer, and keeps its foliage. OR **swamp milkweed** for wetter gardens areas -- fairly tall so not usually a 'front of the border' plant.

For more information and native plant resources, go to www.hrwc.org. Thanks to Shannan Gibb-Randall, landscape architect at Insight Design Studio, LLC for these recommendations. Pictured above is *aster novae-angliae* (new england aster).

Brought to you in part by the
Huron River Watershed Council.
For additional information and
resources go to www.hrwc.org

