

## Applying Fertilizer



Using too much fertilizer may affect water quality.

Nutrients from fertilizers, usually phosphorous, enter creeks and rivers and stimulate the growth of algae.

Excessive algae growth harms oxygen levels thus killing fish and other aquatic life.

### Here's How You Can Help Limit Fertilizer Usage:

- Prior to fertilizing, test the soil for nutrient levels & use tests to add only needed nutrients.
- Leave grass clippings on the lawn as a natural fertilizer.
- Do not apply fertilizers when rain is forecasted or while it's raining.
- Sweep fertilizer off driveways and sidewalks versus washing off.
- When applying fertilizers follow label directions. **DO NOT OVER APPLY!**
- Consider vegetation that doesn't need fertilization.
- Make sure you properly store and discard unused portions.



## Why Care About Clean Water?

Stormwater pollution is one of the greatest threats to Rockford's creeks and rivers. Clean water means safe drinking water, places for recreation, commercial opportunities, healthy wildlife habitats, and adds beauty to the landscape. Rain washes pollution from streets, parking lots and lawns into storm sewers and drainage ditches then directly to our streams, rivers and ultimately, the ocean.



City of Rockford  
Department of Public Works  
Engineering Division  
425 East State Street  
Rockford, Illinois 61104  
Phone: 815-987-5570  
Fax: 815-967-7058  
[www.rockfordil.gov](http://www.rockfordil.gov)

November 2011



## APPLYING FERTILIZERS AND PESTICIDES

**IF YOU USE TOO MUCH FERTILIZER ON YOUR LAWN.....**

**YOU MIGHT AS WELL FERTILIZE THE STREAM**



## What's the Problem with Fertilizers and Pesticides?

Fertilizers help plants grow by adding nutrients to the soil. Pesticides (including herbicides)



are any toxic substance used to kill insects, animals, or plants. If fertilizers and pesticides are improperly applied they can wash off your lawn or garden into the storm basin and directly to our creeks and rivers. These chemicals can contaminate your drinking water, as well as kill fish, wildlife and desirable plants. Too much fertilizer washing into a water body can cause algae blooms which will affect swimming, fishing and boating.

## Did You Know?

- 60% of water pollution comes from things like motor oil, fertilizers, pet wastes and detergents.
- Homeowners use 6 times more fertilizer than farmers



## Pest Management

### Are pests a pain?

Try preventing them first:

- Remove sources of food, water and shelter for pests.
- Store food in sealed containers.
- Garbage with food scraps should be stored in tight containers and removed regularly.
- Fix leaky plumbing and don't let water accumulate anywhere in the home. Don't let water collect in trays under your house plants or refrigerator. Don't leave pet food and water out overnight.
- Clutter provides places for pests to breed and hide and makes it hard to get rid of them. Get rid of things like stacks of newspapers, magazines, or cardboard.
- Close off places where pests can enter and hide. For example, caulk cracks and crevices around cabinets or baseboards. Use steel wool to fill spaces around pipes. Cover any holes with wire mesh.
- Learn about the pests you have and options to control them.
- Check for pests in packages or boxes before carrying them into your home.



## Applying Pesticides

Try the following methods to reduce pests and minimizing pollution when using pesticides.



Toxic pesticides can adversely affect your family, neighbors, pets and the surrounding environment. Pesticide is the generic term for insecticides, herbicides and fungicides.

- Read labels and use as directed. **DO NOT OVER APPLY!**
- Properly store and dispose of unused chemicals. Store in original containers with labels.
- Use prescription flea drops for pets instead of treating an entire lawn.
- Have weeds, diseases and insects properly identified before applying a pesticide.
- Spot treat only affected areas so you don't harm beneficial insects.
- Control pests and disease by rinsing plants, pruning and hand picking, setting baits/traps.
- Try nontoxic or less toxic methods and products.
- Do not apply when rain is forecasted.

