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New Jersey's new Fertilizer Law, enacted on January 5, 2011, is really about water quality. It still allows you to feed your lawn, but in a way that reduces adverse impact on New Jersey waters.



*This guide was created by the Association of New Jersey Environmental Commissions (ANJEC) with support from the Garden Club of Morristown. For more information, visit [www.anjec.org](http://www.anjec.org) or call 973-539-7547.*

## Resources

### Web sites

NJ Department of Environmental Protection :  
[www.nj.gov/dep/healthylawnshealthywater/](http://www.nj.gov/dep/healthylawnshealthywater/)

New Jersey Environmental Center:  
[www.njenvironment.org](http://www.njenvironment.org)

Rutgers Cooperative Extension: [www.rce.rutgers.edu](http://www.rce.rutgers.edu)

NRCS Tips for Home & Garden care:  
[www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature/highlights/homegarden/lawn.html](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature/highlights/homegarden/lawn.html)

NRCS Backyard Fact Sheets: [www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature/backyard](http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/feature/backyard)

### Books:

Handbook of Successful Ecological Lawn Care by Paul Sachs, 1996

Redesigning the American Lawn by F. Bormann, D. Balmori and G. Geballe, 2001

### Products:

Lawn-A-Live, Ridgewood, NJ: 1-800-443-5296

Organic Gardening supplies: [www.gardensalive.com](http://www.gardensalive.com)

Gardener's Supply Company: [www.gardeners.com](http://www.gardeners.com)

Indoor/Outdoor earth friendly gardening supplies:  
[www.wormsway.com](http://www.wormsway.com)



# New Jersey's new Fertilizer Law

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**What you should know  
to maintain a healthy,  
green lawn while keeping  
our State's waters clean**



# The new Fertilizer Law— It's all about the water

*Clean water sustains life for all of us. Protection of our water depends on our actions and choices. 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 that we use to beautify our properties. This water flows directly to the nearest stream, often into our drinking water supply.*

*When nutrients become too abundant in our waterways, "blooms" of algae form and eventually die off and get consumed by bacteria. The bacteria deplete oxygen in the water, robbing it from marine life that needs oxygen to survive and causing water pollution.*

The information in this brochure is meant for NJ residents. Lawn care professionals will be required to go through training and become certified, or be supervised by a certified individual, in order to apply fertilizer to turf. Some other details, such as the dates professionals are allowed to apply fertilizer, the amounts they can apply, where they can apply it, and the formulations of fertilizer, are different from homeowner regulations.

## What the Law requires

To protect our State's waterways from excess nutrients in storm-water runoff, New Jersey's new Fertilizer Law requires residents to follow these rules:

- 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 Nov. 15 to March 1.
- Professional lawn care providers may not apply fertilizer from Dec. 1 through March 15.

## About phosphorous

Fertilizers containing phosphorous may not be applied to turf except when:

- A soil test, no more than three years old, indicates the need for it;\*
- You are establishing turf or vegetation for the first time;
- You are repairing or re-establishing turf;
- You are applying liquid or granular fertilizer under the soil surface, directly to roots;
- The fertilizer consists of manipulated animal or vegetable waste, if it includes no more than 1/4 pound of phosphorous per 1,000 sq. ft. of treated area.

\* Effective January 5, 2012

## Green lawns / less fertilizer

Educate yourself about ways to keep your lawn healthy and reduce the need for fertilizers as well as pesticides and frequent watering.

- Monitor your lawn and identify any potential problems as they develop. Treat only the problems that exist and try natural and mechanical controls first before resorting to chemicals.
- Convert part of your lawn to natural landscaping to reduce chemical use and save water and your own labor. Using native plants, ground cover, pathways and other features, instead of turf, enhances the beauty and diversity of your landscape.
- Apply mulch to flower, vegetable, tree and shrub beds to help them retain moisture, improve soil quality and keep plants healthy.
- When planting new turf or reseeding existing lawns, consider drought-tolerant species of grass such as ryes, bentgrass and fescues and allow your lawn to turn brown in the summer. Fall rains will revive the lush green.
- Use a mulching mower that deposits grass clippings on the lawn after mowing to release valuable nutrients back to the soil. Set the mower at 3 to 4 inches and mow as needed, never cutting off more than one third of leaf height at a time.
- Aerate the soil before seeding to prevent weeds and reduce soil compaction and thatch regularly.
- Test the soil's pH each year and add lime as needed.