

# Green Grass & Clear Water



*Did you know that you can have a healthy, green lawn that is both attractive and safer for the environment?*

Some lawn care practices create local water quality problems. Excess nutrients (including nitrogen and phosphorus found in fertilizers) that run off our properties into nearby waterbodies can trigger harmful algal blooms.

Many of us enjoy the time we spend working on our lawns and are willing to try new practices as long as our lawns continue to look good. This information card shares simple and easy tips, customized for northern New England, that can lead to **Green Grass & Clear Water**.

For more details about these tips and others:

[extension.unh.edu/tags/home-lawn-care](https://extension.unh.edu/tags/home-lawn-care)



**1 Choose the right grass seed.** The best seed mixes include low maintenance varieties with higher % of fine-leaf fescues and turf- or compact-type tall fescues, and lower % of Kentucky bluegrass and perennial rye grass.



**2 Mow smart.** Leave grass at least 3" high. Cut no more than one-third ( $\frac{1}{3}$ ) of the blade each time you mow to encourage longer, stronger roots. Leave the grass clippings after mowing so they can return nutrients to the soil.



**3 Don't overwater.** 1" of water per week (from rain or irrigation) is usually enough. Overwatering can cause nutrients to move out of root zones and into waterbodies or groundwater.



**4 Have your soil tested** to learn more about specific characteristics and needs of your lawn. Contact UNH Cooperative Extension: [extension.unh.edu/programs/soil-testing-services](https://extension.unh.edu/programs/soil-testing-services)

**Only if your lawn requires added nutrients from fertilizer:**



**5 Avoid overapplying.** Measure the area where you plan to apply and calculate the square footage. For lawns 10+ years old, apply half ( $\frac{1}{2}$ ) the amount recommended for your square area one time per season. New lawns may need another application. Don't apply more than four times per season.



**6 Choose the right fertilizer.** Select fertilizers with zero or low phosphorus unless a soil test says otherwise. Slow release nitrogen fertilizer is generally preferable. Over-applying fertilizer (any type) can cause water quality problems.



**7 Know when and where to apply.** Apply only after spring "green up" and before mid-September. Avoid applying in mid-summer. Never apply near waterbodies or storm drains.

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Our community cares about clean water and is doing its part to help protect water quality in local waterways by sharing helpful tips and pollution prevention information with our residents.

This outreach message helps our community meet U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) stormwater permit requirements as part of the MS4 program for some New Hampshire municipalities.

With support from:



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