

how you can help the watershed...

lawn & garden

A beautiful, well maintained yard enhances property values and provides a place for recreation and relaxation. But you may be making more work of your yard than is necessary.

What's the most common mistake in yard care? We "spoil" our lawns and gardens! Over-application of fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides wastes money, ruins plants and pollutes waterways. Lawns that are mowed too short develop weak root systems and require frequent watering and maintenance. Removing grass clippings starves your soil of beneficial nutrients and the organic matter necessary to prevent soil compaction.

Put your lawn to work for you!

Follow the simple tips on the back of this card for a healthier lawn that's cheaper and easier to maintain.



Improve water quality right now.
Be smart about garden care.

Want to learn more?

Soil testing & advice: Call your local MSU Extension office:
Livingston 517-546-3950
Oakland 248-858-0902
Washtenaw 734-997-1819

Native plants: Wild Ones, a nonprofit organization, offers native landscaping advice at www.for-wild.org
Native Plant Nursery 734-677-3260
Wildtype Nursery 517-244-1140
Michigan Wildflower Farm 517-647-6010

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- A. **Mow high.** Make your lawn cheaper and easier to maintain by mowing high — three inches is the rule! The roots of your lawn grow as deep as the grass grows tall, so taller grass has deeper, healthier roots. Keep your lawn three inches or higher, and never cut off more than 1/3 of the blade each time you mow.
- B. Put your lawn to work for you! **Mulch** leaves and grass clippings into your lawn for a natural fertilizer rich in nutrients and organic matter. Compost yard waste for use next season.
- C. **Spread lightly.** Most fertilizer manufacturers' guidelines are excessive for this area. One application of low phosphorus fertilizer in the fall is adequate for a healthy lawn. If you mulch your grass clippings into your lawn, you may not need to fertilize at all.
- D. Check yard and garden product labels. **Follow directions carefully.** Do not over-apply fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides or fungicides. These products destroy beneficial microorganisms and disrupt the natural balance in your soils. Before you tackle a yard and garden problem, call the MSU Extension Master Gardeners for advice. (See box on reverse side.)
- E. Landscape with **native plants.** They are naturally suited to our weather and soil conditions, which means less work for you! (See box on reverse side for a list of resources.)



**Keep lawn and garden care simple
so you can enjoy your summer!**