

The First Steps in Achieving a Beautiful Lawn

By Jessica Beckendorf, Associate Planner

Spring is here, and for many of us that means a trip to the local lawn and garden store to find the perfect fertilizer that promises to keep your lawn lush, green, and better-looking than your neighbor's. And, like we have been told to do all our lives, most of us flip that bag of fertilizer over and follow the instructions. Unfortunately, these instructions tend to be very general and do not take into consideration the soil type of your particular lawn. For instance, many of us in the City of Menasha would probably find that our soils require little, if any additional phosphorus (P) to maintain a healthy lawn. As a result, we can select fertilizers low in phosphorus and still maintain a beautiful, healthy lawn. (P is the middle number on fertilizer bags – see below for a brief explanation).

But how do you find out which nutrients your lawn needs? A simple soil test will tell you everything you need to know regarding the nutrient needs of your lawn and garden. To find out more about collecting soil samples, contact your county UW-Extension Agriculture Educator. For Winnebago County residents, call 727-8643; Calumet County residents should call 989-2700, ext. 2.

Once you've had your soil tested, take care to read the fertilizer bags and learn what the numbers mean. For example, if the numbers on the bag are 22-0-15, keep this in mind:

22	0	15
Nitrogen	Phosphorus	Potash (potassium)

Follow the above advice and your lawn may become the envy of your neighborhood! Watch *The Horizon* for more lawn care tips, or visit http://www.cityofmenasha-wi.gov/content/departments/community_development/Pollution_Prevention_Tips.php

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Good Housekeeping...Outside?

By Jessica Beckendorf, Associate Planner

Picture this: Lake Winnebago in the summer...glistening and full of life...recreational boaters...fisherman...jet-skiers...and bright green, pungent-smelling algae. Almost a perfect picture.

The good news is, everyone can help make Lake Winnebago and all our local lakes and streams picture-perfect. One of the best things you can do is practice good housekeeping after lawn and yard care activities.

Grass clippings, fertilizers, and leaves contain phosphorous which contributes to algae blooms and nuisance weed growth in our local waterways. Simply sweeping grass clippings and fertilizer back onto your lawn after mowing and fertilizing can go a long way toward improving overall water quality and reducing algae blooms.



Lake Winnebago during algae bloom – yes, that is a dead fish floating on top!

Listed below are a few other things you can do:

- Mulch grass and leaves and leave them on your lawn.
- While mowing, try to direct grass clippings away from paved surfaces.
- Mow your lawn at a higher setting and let the clippings fall back onto the lawn.
- Don't forget to sweep – keep everything on your lawn!

For more information, contact your county UW-Extension office or visit http://www.cityofmenasha-wi.gov/content/departments/community_development/Pollution_Prevention_Tips.php.