

Correct Usage of Fertilizers

Misapplication of fertilizer is the most frequent cause of surface water and groundwater contamination. More is not always better when fertilizing your yard. Excessive watering or a rainstorm can wash away the chemical excess—wasting your money and endangering nearby waterways. Stormwater from the City of Forest Hill drains into Lake Arlington. Nitrogen and phosphorus compounds in fertilizers contribute to the growth of algae in the lake. The following recommended practices can reduce the risk of pollution.

- Apply fertilizers only when necessary.
- Apply fertilizers according to the label's directions and only to plants that are specified on the label. Only use the recommended amount of fertilizer.
- Apply fertilizer as close as possible to the period of maximum uptake and growth for grass and other plants, which is usually early and late summer in warm climates.
- Avoid applying fertilizer close to waterways.
- Do not overwater lawns and gardens. Use a soaker hose that releases water directly to the ground, which reduces the risk of washing fertilizer away from the application site.
- Fill fertilizer spreaders on a hard surface so that any spills can be easily cleaned up.
- Properly store unused fertilizer and properly dispose of empty containers.
- Choose natural or organic fertilizers.
- After mowing, leave grass clippings on your lawn. These clippings act as a slow-release fertilizer for your grass.
- Apply mulch around trees and shrubs, reducing the need for fertilizers.

Information from <http://takecareoftexas.org> and www.epa.gov.