NEWSLETTER

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14 Mile Watershed Friends and Supporters . . .

Ideas for Protecting Our Lakes and Watershed
This Month's Focus: Sustainable Lawn Care

Everybody looks forward to the spring and summer months as it means enjoyable times spent on our lakes. Good water quality is something we all appreciate and want to achieve on a continuing basis. When conditions are right, algae blooms can occur and sometimes even result in toxic Blue-Green Algae.

Algae blooms are caused by high levels of nitrogen and phosphorus. There is not a single cause that creates increased levels of nitrogen and phosphorus in our lakes. We, as property owners, can do our part to help stop nitrogen and phosphorus from our properties entering the ground water or running directly into the lakes.

A HUGE contributor to this runoff is lawn fertilizer. Recognizing the importance of healthy lakes to our community, the Town of Rome encourages lake frontage property owners to consider use of lake water irrigation as a source of natural fertilization in lieu of applying commercial lawn fertilizer products.

Further, the Town has enacted a fertilizer ordinance that includes the following:

1. No fertilizer can be applied within 35 feet of the shoreline or to an established natural buffer zone

2. Zero % phosphorus (the middle number on the package) is required by Wisconsin State Law

3. Any fertilizer applied to impervious surfaces such as driveways and sidewalks needs to be immediately contained and either legally applied to turf or placed in an appropriate container

4. No person shall apply any lawn fertilizer within the Town of Rome that is labeled as containing less than 20% slow-release nitrogen.

Many of us come to our lake community from the city. Often there, pride in maintaining a pristine, weed-free green lawn is the norm. However, in lake communities, the opposite is required in order to affect the good water quality that we all desire. The best practice for shoreline properties is to stop fertilizing or to switch only to lake water irrigation. For those properties that are offshore, we recommend that you consider stopping fertilizing or using a fertilizer product with a high content of slow-release nitrogen.

Please join us in implementing these efforts to improve our lakes

Some additional ideas to make any lawn more eco-friendly:

- *Reduce or eliminate the use of pesticides and fertilizers.* This keeps chemicals out of waterway and limits the collateral damage to wildlife. Using herbicides to eliminate plants like dandelions and white clover does more harm than good.

- *Leave your lawn a bit longer.* Set your mower deck height to at least 3 inches tall (4 is even better).
- *Introduce low-growing natives* such as violets, bluets, pussytoes or wild strawberries. Using locally adapted native plants helps support specialist pollinators.
- *Reduce the size of your lawn.* Begin with steep slopes, narrow pathways and odd-shaped, hard-to-mow areas. These are ideal for lawn alternatives like sedges or other ground covers.

EVENT REMINDER

The Rome Annual 'State of Our Lakes' Lunch will be held on Saturday, June 6 from 11:00 - 2:00 at the Rome Town Hall

DONATE

The 14 Mile Watershed Alliance is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the improvement of surface and groundwater in the 14 Mile Creek Watershed in central Wisconsin.
See us at 14milewatershed.org or https://www.facebook.com/14MileWatershed

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