

# Lawn Care Tips for Clean Water

Did you know that many common lawn care practices can lead to significant water quality problems? Follow these tips to protect your watershed by reducing the runoff of pesticides and excess nutrients into waterways.

- **Use pesticides and fertilizers sparingly.** When possible, pull weeds by hand or spot treat instead of treating large areas. Have your soil tested to find out whether it needs fertilizer. Use lawn chemicals only when needed, and in the recommended amounts. Never apply chemicals when the forecast calls for rain, otherwise chemicals will be washed off your lawn and into local streams and lakes.
- **Mow High!** Mowing at least 3" high will help to crowd out weeds and promote deeper roots to make the lawn more drought-resistant. Leave clippings on the lawn to return nutrients to the soil, and sweep or blow clippings from sidewalks or driveways back onto the lawn. Compost yard waste when possible.
- **Don't Overwater.** Water during cool times of the day, and do not leave sprinklers on long enough for water to puddle up or run off into storm drains. Use a rain barrel to collect water from your roof to use on your plants.
- **Use native plants.** Native plants do not need to be watered or fertilized, and they provide valuable habitat for birds, butterflies, and other wildlife.

For more information on green lawn care, visit  
<http://www.epa.gov/oppfead1/Publications/catalog/greenscaping.pdf>



*This information has been provided by the  
Muskegon Area Municipal Stormwater Committee.*

