

PHOSPHORUS FERTILIZER RESTRICTIONS FOR LAWNS ARE NOW IN EFFECT THROUGHOUT MICHIGAN

Michigan Fertilizer Act Restrictions – 2012

As of January 1, 2012, home and commercial lawn fertilizers containing phosphorus are subject to certain restrictions.

The update to the Michigan Fertilizer Act enacted in 2010 (Public Act 299 of 2010) prohibits the use of phosphorus fertilizers for home and commercial lawns EXCEPT if:

- (a) A soil test indicates that phosphorus is needed for the lawn;
- (b) The fertilizer is to be used for new turf establishment (seed or sod);
- (c) The fertilizer contains biosolids, manure or a manipulated (composted) manure and the application rate is limited to 0.25 pounds of phosphorus per 1000 square feet (e.g., low-phosphorus application); and/or
- (d) Fertilizer application will be on a golf course where managers are trained.

Proposed Amendments for Natural Organic Products

Additional amendments to the Michigan Fertilizer Law have been drafted by the Michigan Department of Agriculture and introduced into the Michigan Legislature. The amendments will clarify definitions and will also recognize that low-phosphorus natural organic fertilizers (not just biosolids and manures) do not harm the environment and should be allowed.

Compost Used on the Lawn

Municipal compost (e.g. yard waste compost) when used on the lawn is not subject to the state fertilizer regulation unless it is packaged as a fertilizer with claims related to nutrients and plant growth. SOCRRA compost is low in phosphorus.

Healthy Lawn Care Tips for Water Quality

Phosphorus reduction in fertilizers is only one of many steps that helps protect water quality – while supporting a dense, green lawn that holds soil in place. Other tips for a healthy lawn include: cut grass high...and let the clippings lie on the lawn; build soil organic matter;; aerate compacted soil; don't fertilize before early May (especially if you fertilized in the fall); fertilize in the fall for best results, and more.

For printed reference, go to: www.socwa.org and review the report titled “Healthy Lawn Care Program for Homeowners” (2011-2012 update).

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Michigan Department of Agriculture
SOCWA (SE Oakland County Water Authority)
Michigan State University Turfgrass Science

www.michigan.gov/mda-fertilizer.
www.socwa.org/lawns_gardens.shtml
www.turf.msu.edu