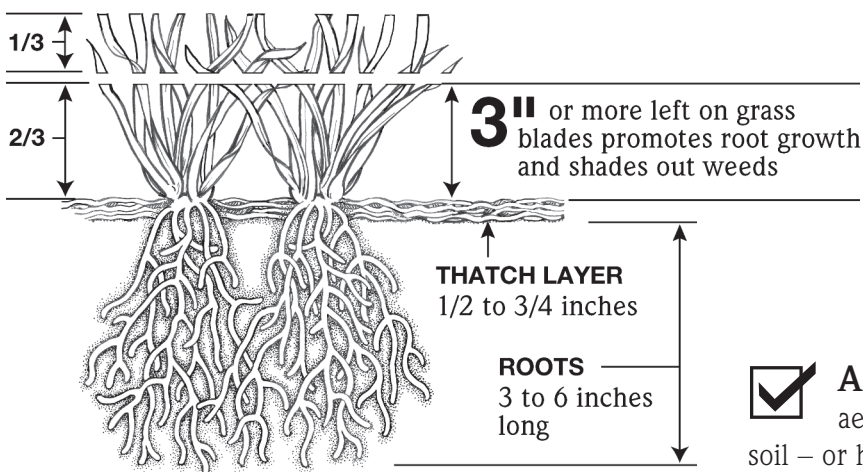




Healthy Lawn CARE TIPS 2012

SOCWA, Southeastern Oakland County Water Authority 3910 W. Webster Road, Royal Oak, MI 48073-2761, 248-288-5150

Cut It High...Let It Lie!



For further information...

SOCWA Healthy Lawn Care Information
www.socwa.org/lawns_gardens.shtml

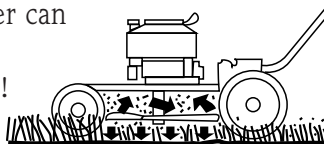
MSU Phosphorus Smart Tip Card
www.BePhosphorusSmart.msu.edu

MSU Turfgrass Science
www.turf.msu.edu

Oakland County Plant and Pest Hotline
248-858-0902

Healthy Lawn Checklist

- ☒ **Mulch Your Grass Clippings.** Let short clips fall back on the lawn. Clippings are a source of nitrogen, so fertilizer can be reduced by 25% or more. Clippings do not cause thatch!



- ☒ **Cut High.** Leave 3 inches on the grass blade after cutting. Tall grass promotes root growth and shades out weeds.

- ☒ **Build Soil Organic Matter – to 5% or More.** Healthy soil has 5% or more organic matter. The organic matter provides a natural reservoir of nutrients and holds water. To assess your soil, test for basic nutrients and organic matter every one to three years.

- ☒ **Don't Guess... Soil Test!**

April 2 – May 1, 2012.

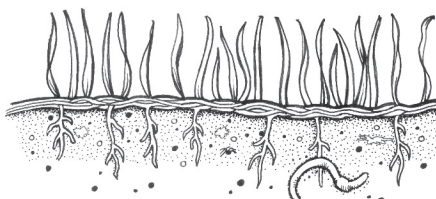
To test your soil for nutrients, pH, and organic matter, purchase an MSU soil test box at a participating retailer during April. Results will be sent to you via e-mail. For additional information, see www.socwa.org or telephone 248-288-5150.

- ☒ **Aerate Compacted Soil.** Use a core aerator to remove finger-like plugs of grass and soil – or hire a landscape service. Aeration improves drainage and allows water and oxygen to reach the grass roots.

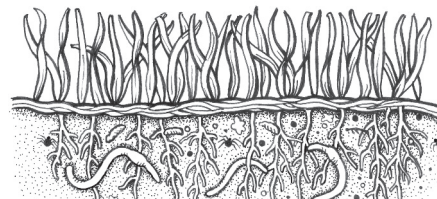
- ☒ **Rake Compost Into the Lawn.** Rake 1/2 inch of compost into an established lawn. Leave half of the grass blade exposed to sunlight and air. Compost adds microorganisms, nutrients and organic matter, helping to build soil fertility.

- ☒ **Water the Lawn to Minimize Stress.** A green lawn in Michigan needs .5 to 1.5 inches of water per week. Don't soak your lawn; watering should not produce puddles. Light, frequent watering which reaches the grass roots is recommended by Michigan State University. Lawn dormancy is a natural response to drought. However, some water may be necessary during an extended drought of more than a month.

HEALTHY SOIL HAS HIGH ORGANIC MATTER CONTENT



LOW ORGANIC MATTER

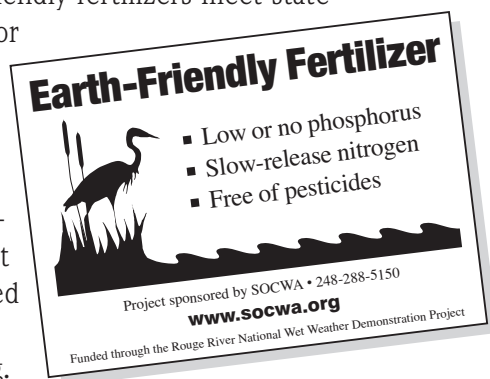


HIGH ORGANIC MATTER

Healthy Lawn Checklist, continued

☒ **Select Earth-Friendly Fertilizers.**

Earth-friendly fertilizers meet state requirements for low or no phosphorus. Look for the green label at participating retailers. For a list of recommended fertilizers, see www.socwa.org.



☒ **Fertilize in the Fall for Best Results. Do Not Fertilize Before May.**

Fall fertilization builds grass roots. Additional fertilizer before May is rarely needed. Do not spread fertilizer if the ground is frozen.

☒ **Sweep Fertilizer from Paved Surfaces.**

Fertilizer left on sidewalks and driveways can easily wash into storm drains, rivers, and lakes. Sweep fertilizer pellets back onto the lawn.

☒ **Mow Dry Leaves.**

In the Fall, mow dry leaves into the lawn. A shallow layer of leaf fragments will decompose quickly and contribute organic matter and nutrients to the soil system.

☒ **Leave a “No Fertilizer” Buffer Zone Near Lakes and Rivers.**

A “no fertilizer” buffer of 20 – 25 feet or more is recommended by many water quality experts. Instead of turfgrass at the water’s edge, consider planting native grasses, wildflowers, and shrubs that trap pollutants.

☒ **Avoid Weed-and-Feed Combination Products.**

Combination fertilizer and weed control products often unnecessary herbicides to the landscape. Herbicides may pose a threat to animals, plants and insects beyond the intended weeds or pests. Instead spot-treat or hand dig weeds.

☒ **Practice IPM – Integrated Pest Management.**

Identify the weed or insect of concern and select the least toxic control option. Read the label and follow directions – the label is the law. Telephone the National Pesticide Information Center (NPIC) at 1-800-858-7378 for chemical impact information.

☒ **If you Use a Lawn Service, Request the Healthy Lawn Care Program for Watershed Protection.**

For a list of endorsed companies, contact the Michigan Green Industry Association at 248-646-4992 or see www.Landscape.org, section titled professionals/contractors.

Phosphorus Fertilizer Restrictions for Lawns Now in Effect

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

An update (Public Act 299 of 2010) to the Michigan Fertilizer Act 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) Application will be on a golf course where managers have completed certain training classes.

For additional information,
see www.michigan.gov/mda-fertilizer.

Note #1: Amendments to the Michigan Fertilizer Law that will clarify definitions and low-phosphorus fertilizer options have been introduced in the Michigan Legislature by the Michigan Department of Agriculture.

Note #2: Compost used on the lawn is not subject to this regulation unless it is packaged as a fertilizer with nutrient or plant growth claims.