

## What is the issue with Fertilizer?

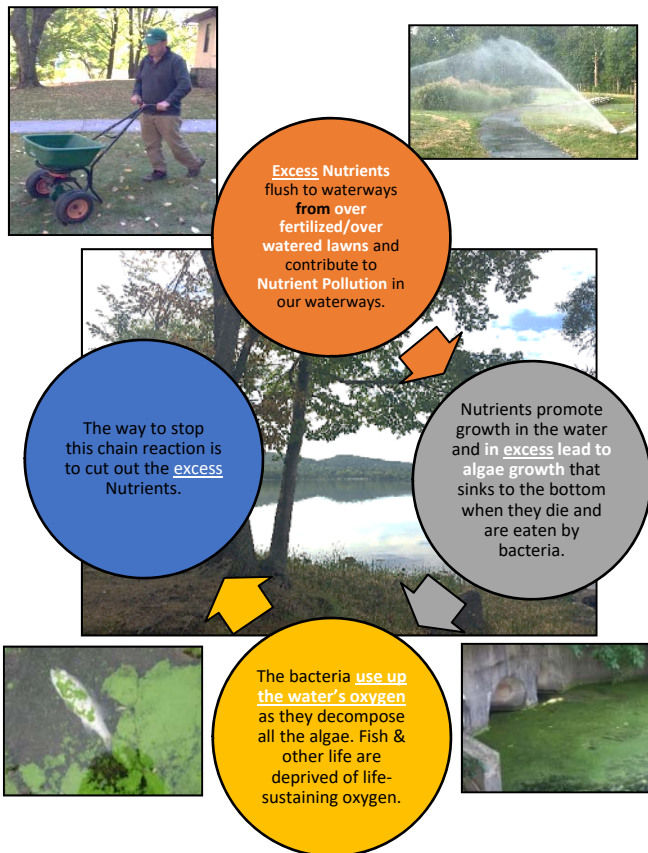
**Nutrient Pollution** is present in many Rockland County waterbodies due to **excess Nitrogen and Phosphorus nutrients**. Fertilizers contain Nitrogen and Phosphorus to promote lawn growth, and when applied to lawns that are **too thin** or **prior to periods of rain**, the lawn cannot absorb all the Nutrients.

During the next rain storm the **excess** Nutrients wash off the lawn to storm drains then local waterbodies, starting the process of **Nutrient Eutrophication ("richness")**, a top Water Quality Issue in NYS, that impairs our waters.

**Aren't Nutrients Good for Waterbodies?**

**YES!**

**How Do They Cause Harm?**



**Are Nutrient-Impaired Waters Harmful for Human Recreation?**  
**If Hazardous Algae Blooms form, recreation would be impacted.**

## Rockland County's Fertilizer Law:

Over-fertilized/overwatered lawns is a significant source of excess nutrients in waterbodies. If applying **lawn** fertilizer in Rockland County you must obey the **Lawn Fertilizer Regulation Act of 2009**.

Under the Act, no person shall apply any lawn fertilizer:

- Between December 1<sup>st</sup> and April 1<sup>st</sup>.
- To any Impervious surface (parking lots, roadways, sidewalks).
- To any lawn or turf within 50 feet of any surface water. This does not apply where a continuous, 10 foot minimum natural vegetative buffer separates the lawn or turf area and the surface water.
- Containing Phosphorus or such compounds (phosphate), except as provided in the Exemptions (below).

Exemptions:

- Turf or Lawn areas soil tested that confirm the need for additional phosphorus. The amount applied shall not exceed the amount and rate recommended from the soil test. See back on **where to get a soil test**.
- Agricultural uses, applications to trees, shrubs, vegetable and flower gardens.

Buying/Selling Fertilizer:

- No one shall display for sale lawn fertilizers containing phosphorus.
- Signs must be posted advising customers that phosphorus fertilizers are available upon request.
- Sellers are required to post a sign regarding the Act and the effect of Nitrogen and Phosphorus on Water Quality in Rockland County.

Educational Requirements:

- Every person who offers or provides **lawn or turf services, in operation of a home improvement business**, shall complete a turf management course approved by the Department of Consumer Protection (provided through **Cornell Cooperative Extension, Rockland County**) every two years. See our **Fertilizer Law Course**, held monthly.

Photo & Images courtesy of:  
 USEPA; NYSDEC; Department of Horticulture, Cornell University, hort.cals.cornell.edu

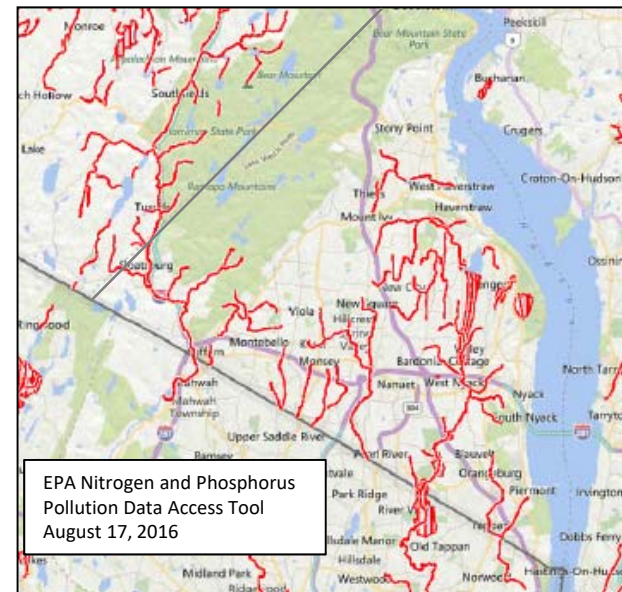
**Where to get a Soil Test**  
 (see Exemptions, previous side):

What you can have tested:

- **pH Test**
- **Nutrients & pH:** Pick up a free test box to mail out.

**Cornell University**

Cooperative Extension, Rockland County  
 10 Patriot Hills Drive  
 Stony Point, NY 10980  
 Phone: (845) 429-7085  
 Website: [www.rocklandcce.org](http://www.rocklandcce.org)

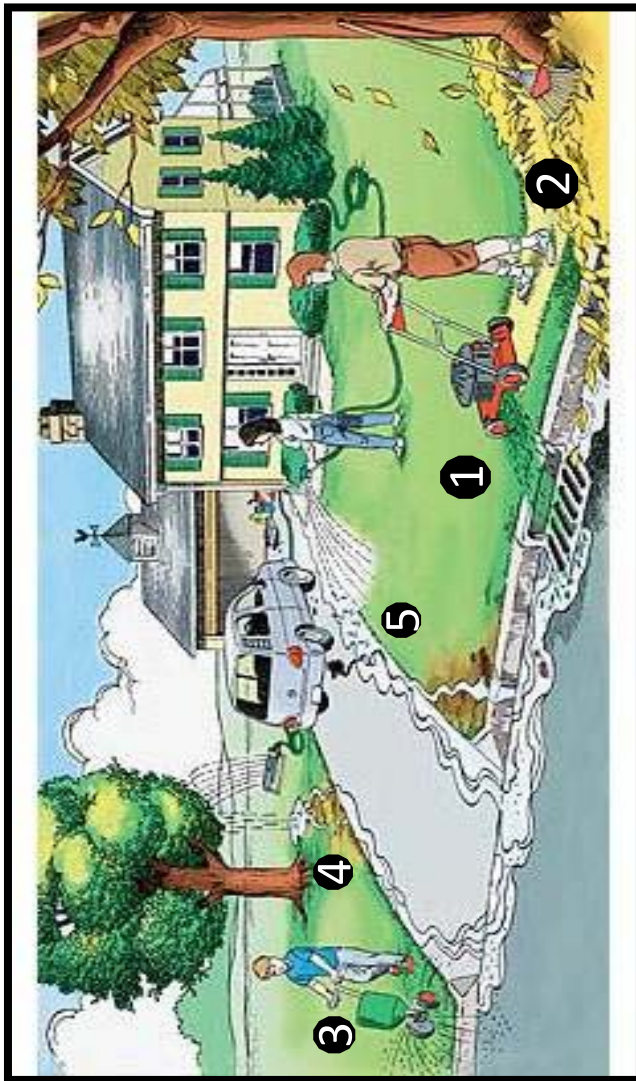


**Rockland County's**  
**Nutrient-Impaired Waters:**

EPA's Waters Listed for  
 Nitrogen and Phosphorus Impairments

For purposes of identifying nutrient-related impairments, EPA used the following national impairment categories: algal growth, ammonia, noxious aquatic plants, nutrients, organic enrichment/oxygen depletion

## Where does Nutrient Pollution come from?



- 1&2:** Leaves & Grass Clippings to Catch Basin
- 3:** Applying Fertilizer on Impervious Surface (washing to Catch Basin)
- 4&5:** Overwatering fertilized lawn, draining to Catch Basin

These practices cause **Nutrient Pollution** and contribute to **Algae Blooms**

### Water-wise Landscaping will soak up Nutrient Pollution!

A **drought-tolerant landscape** will also use less water, fertilizer, and be less maintenance once established.

**Cornell's Fact-Sheets** for Water-Wise Landscaping, Rain Gardening, Xeriscaping, Fertilizing, etc:

<http://rocklandcce.org/fact-sheets>

**EPA Water-Smart Landscapes:**

[https://www3.epa.gov/watersense/outdoor/landscaping\\_tips.html](https://www3.epa.gov/watersense/outdoor/landscaping_tips.html)



### Educational Resources:

**Rockland County Fertilizer Law:**

<http://ecode360.com/14213147>

**Fertilizer & Pesticide Certificate Programs:**

<http://rocklandcce.org/environment/fertilizer-law-certificate-program>

**Local Sources for Organic Materials:**

<http://rocklandcce.org/fact-sheets>

**Learn to Compost/Mulch Fall Leaves:**

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/public/46613.html>

**Leave it on the Lawn (Grass Clippings):**

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8816.html>

**Composting Instructions & Lawn Guidance:**

<http://rocklandcce.org/gardening/compost-resources>

**Look for the Zero:**

[http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/water\\_pdf/fertbrochure15.pdf](http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/water_pdf/fertbrochure15.pdf)

**USEPA Nutrient Pollution:**

<https://www.epa.gov/nutrientpollution>

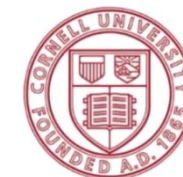
**Hazardous Algae Blooms:**

<http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/77118.html>

## Are you ILLEGALLY Applying Fertilizer in Rockland County?



Rockland Lake  
Nutrient-Impaired Waterbody



**Cornell University**  
Cooperative Extension  
Rockland County  
10 Patriot Hills Drive  
Stony Point, NY 10980  
Phone: (845) 429-7085  
Website: [www.rocklandcce.org](http://www.rocklandcce.org)

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