

# FACT SHEET OF THE MONTH

## CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF PLYMOUTH FACT SHEET RIVER FRIENDLY LAWN CARE

### Rouge River Series



Everything that we put on our lawns has the potential to be washed into a storm drain and directed into the Rouge River without treatment. For Example, excess fertilizers from our lawns are washed into the storm drains and flow directly into the Rouge River. Once in the river, fertilizers, especially those high in phosphorous, can produce hundreds of pounds of weeds and algae that compete with other aquatic life for oxygen.

As these aquatic plants die, micro-organisms use the organic matter as a food source. These micro-organisms then grow and reproduce and use up the oxygen in the water. Any increase in the amount of aquatic plant growth ultimately will result in a reduced dissolved oxygen content of the water body, eventually suffocating fish and negatively impacting water quality. Before you begin your lawn care regimen, consider implementing the river friendly lawn care tips offered below.

#### Tip No. 1 - Build Fertile Soils



**Test your Soil.** Contact Michigan State University for a \$25 soil test kit.

**Use mulch** (shredded leaves, grass clippings or compost) around plants and on the soil to resist weeds and retain moisture.

**Use compost.** Rake 1/2 inch of compost into established lawns leaving at least half of the grass blade exposed.

**Aerate** compacted soils with a core aerator.

#### Tip No. 2 - Choose Natives

Select plants suited for the site and climate conditions with an emphasis on native plants. See Guide No. RRS 4 or visit the native plant section of our web site for more information.

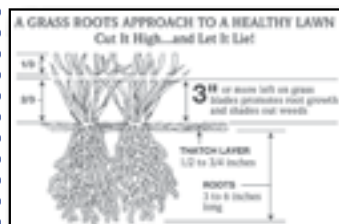


#### Tip No. 4 - Reduce the Use

Reduce the use of insecticides, herbicides and other pesticides on your lawn or in your garden. Spot treatments make better sense economically and environmentally. Remember, not all insects are harmful; some are beneficial and necessary for pollination!



#### Tip No. 3 - Cut it High and Let it Lie



Try grass cycling. Mow your grass at a height of three (3) inches and let the short grass blades fall back onto the lawn. Grass clippings are an ideal fertilizer because they are packed with essential nutrients plus they provide organic matter which reduces soil compaction and promotes root growth.

#### Tip No. 5 - Fertilize Slowly

**Use slow release fertilizers.** If you must fertilize, please select a slow-release fertilizer to promote steady, uniform growth. Because these types of fertilizers release nitrogen slowly they reduce or even eliminate the need for additional applications saving you time and money!



#### Tip No. 6 - Watering

A green lawn in Michigan needs .5 to 1.5 inches of water per week. Watering should NOT produce puddles. Michigan State University recommends light and frequent watering.

