

## Keep Lawn Chemicals Out of Streams

Lawn chemicals, such as fertilizer, pesticides, insecticides and herbicides, are commonly used for lawn and garden care. While they may help keep our lawns green and free of weeds and our gardens free of pests, lawn chemicals can harm our waterways.

### What's the Problem?

If not applied correctly, lawn chemicals may wash off of yards when it rains or if you over-water. The chemicals enter storm drains or streams that eventually reach the Missouri River. This not only contaminates our source for drinking water, it poses a health risk to human and

animals and threatens aquatic life.

Lawn chemicals that are absorbed into the ground can also negatively impact the environment and water quality by polluting groundwater and causing excessive weed growth in ponds and lakes.



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### What Can You Do?

1. Have your soil tested for nutrient deficiencies before using lawn chemicals. The information received from the soil test should inform you of what chemicals you should use and how much should be used. Soil testing kits can be found at hardware and home improvement stores.
2. Read product labels carefully and apply the minimum amount directed.
3. Fill fertilizer spreaders on a hard surface where spills can be cleaned up easily. Never sweep fertilizer into the street or leave it on other hard surface areas where it will wash away.
4. Use extra caution when applying lawn chemicals to areas where runoff is most likely to occur, such as slopes and lawn edges.
5. Never apply lawn chemicals before heavy rain is expected. Be careful to not over-water after chemicals are applied.
6. Don't mow low. Grass that is 2" to 3" high can help filter and clean water. It also can reduce the need for herbicides by suppressing weed germination and growth.
7. Include native grasses, flowers and other species in your lawn and landscape. Native plants prevent erosion, are drought resistant, and eliminate the need for lawn chemicals.
8. Use compost instead of chemicals. Compost is made of organic materials that improve soil conditions and plant health.

For more information on sustainable lawn care: [www.sustland.umn.edu/maint/maint.htm](http://www.sustland.umn.edu/maint/maint.htm)

Or contact:

Buchanan County MU Extension Center  
<http://extension.missouri.edu/buchanan>  
Phone: (816) 279-1691

Email: [buchananco@missouri.edu](mailto:buchananco@missouri.edu)

