

# • IMPORTANT NEWS •

from

## The Houghton Lake Improvement Board

Roscommon County and the four townships surrounding Houghton Lake (Denton, Lake, Markey, and Roscommon) have all adopted ordinances that prohibit the use of lawn fertilizers containing phosphorus. The ordinances became effective on January 1, 2009.

Fertilizers containing phosphorus should not be applied to any lawn in Roscommon County unless a soil test has been performed that indicates a phosphorus deficiency, or a new lawn is being established from seed or sod.

### **Where can I purchase phosphorus-free lawn fertilizer?**

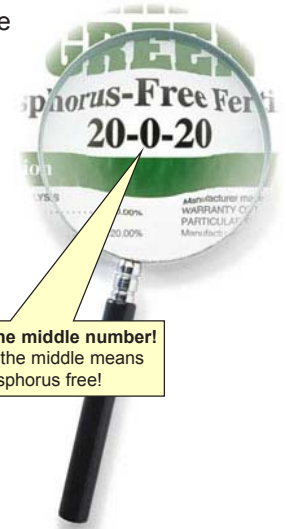
Many local vendors should have phosphorus-free fertilizers available. Look at the label on the fertilizer bag. If the middle number is zero, the fertilizer is phosphorus-free.

### **Why the fuss about phosphorus?**

Phosphorus is the nutrient that most often stimulates excessive growth of aquatic plants, leading to a variety of problems known collectively as eutrophication. Elevated phosphorus levels are causing premature aging of many Michigan lakes. Once in a lake, a single pound of phosphorus can generate hundreds of pounds of aquatic vegetation.

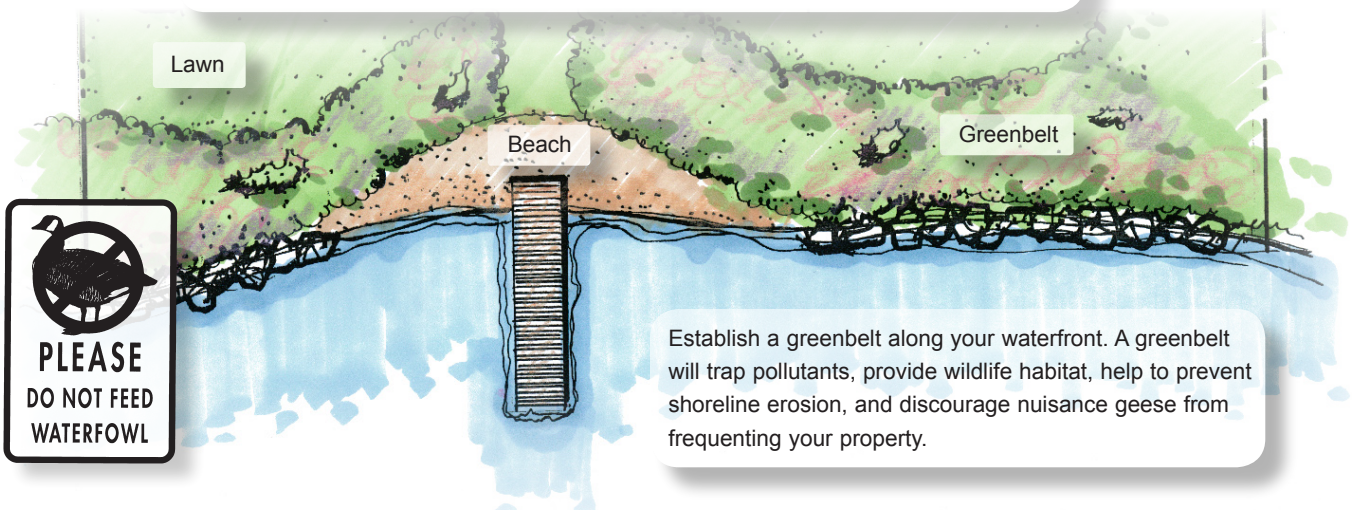
### **What else can I do to protect area lakes and streams?**

- Use the minimum amount of fertilizer recommended on the label—more is not necessarily better!
- Water the lawn sparingly to avoid washing nutrients and sediments into the lake.
- Don't feed ducks and geese near the lake. Waterfowl droppings are high in nutrients and may cause swimmer's itch.
- Don't burn leaves and grass clippings near the shoreline. Nutrients concentrate in the ash and can easily wash into the lake.
- Do not mow to the water's edge. Instead, allow a strip of natural vegetation (i.e., a greenbelt) to become established along your waterfront. A greenbelt will trap pollutants, provide wildlife habitat, and discourage nuisance geese from frequenting your property.
- Where possible, promote infiltration of stormwater into the ground. Build a rain garden to capture runoff from driveways and downspouts. For more information on rain gardens, visit [www.raingardens.org](http://www.raingardens.org).
- Don't dump anything in wetlands. Wetlands are nature's natural purifiers.



**Look for the middle number!**  
A zero in the middle means phosphorus free!

Minimize lawn area. Less turf means less fertilizer, less pesticides—and less mowing!  
It's better for the lake and easier on you.



Establish a greenbelt along your waterfront. A greenbelt will trap pollutants, provide wildlife habitat, help to prevent shoreline erosion, and discourage nuisance geese from frequenting your property.

