

Lawn fertilization impacts the water quality of the Rouge River

DEARBORN, Mich. – Remember. You're not just fertilizing your lawn...

People in southeast Michigan, including Dearborn, enjoy a nice green lawn. While fertilizer is good for our lawn, it contains phosphorus that can be harmful to our lakes and rivers. Storm drains in our streets lead directly to our lakes and rivers.

So, excess fertilizer from our yards that enters the storm drains can cause algae to grow and use up oxygen that fish need to survive. With 1.5 million homes in Southeast Michigan, all of us need to know that our lawn care practices can affect our lakes and rivers, including the Rouge River.

What can you do to help?

Simple. First, find out if your lawn needs fertilizer with a soil test. For information about getting your soil tested in Dearborn, contact the Michigan State University Extension office at 313.833.3412. If you do need to fertilize, choose one with no or low phosphorus. Be sure to sweep excess fertilizer and grass clippings from pavement back onto your lawn so that they do not wash into storm drains. Also, keep fertilizer at least 20 feet away from the edge of any lakes or rivers.

For more easy steps on protecting our lakes and rivers, visit the "Ours to Protect" site at www.semcog.org.