

Health & Environment

Connection



A publication of LocalMotion, a non-profit organization dedicated to "Better Health through Fewer Toxins"

Lake-Friendly Fertilizers

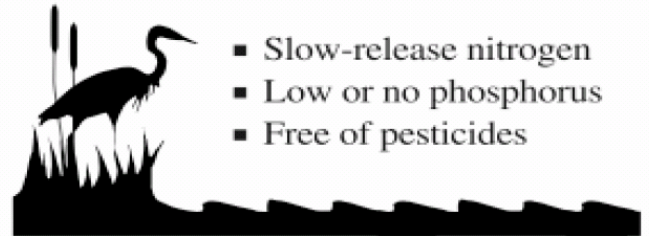
Counties across Michigan are experiencing an overgrowth of plants and algae in local waterways. A major contributing factor is excess phosphorus. Even though phosphorus is no longer allowed in laundry soap, it still occurs in dish detergent and is a main component of lawn and garden fertilizers. These fertilizers reach our waterways by running off our lawns and sidewalks into storm drains or filtering through the groundwater. As a result Macomb County officials are currently considering a ban on phosphorus in fertilizers. Bay County has already decided: phosphorus-containing fertilizers may not be sold or used within the county in order to protect Saginaw Bay.

Fortunately for Michigan gardeners, our soil is plentiful in phosphorus. Most lawns and gardens do not need any extra in order to thrive and bloom. To analyze your patch of earth, Michigan State University Extension offers soil testing and recommendations pinpointing your yard's specific needs. Kits are available through LocalMotion.

Fertilizers with no or low phosphorus can be easily identified when shopping in Wayne County or St. Clair Shores. In Wayne County neon green "Earth-Friendly Fertilizer" stickers tag the safer products. In St. Clair Shores, look for the bright yellow "Lake Safe Fertilizer" sticker. Remember organic ingredients nourish the soil over time and encourage

beneficial organisms. Synthetic options actually deplete the soil of naturally-occurring beneficials. Also avoid products labeled "weed and feed" as this means the fertilizer contains pesticides.

Earth-Friendly Fertilizer



- Slow-release nitrogen
- Low or no phosphorus
- Free of pesticides

Project sponsored by SOCWA • 248-288-5150

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Here are three organic fertilizers with no phosphorous available locally:

Clean Green (7-0-0): made from soybeans; found at all English Gardens, Allemon's in Detroit (313-882-9085), Uncle Luke's Feed Store in Troy (248-879-9147), and other garden centers

Corn Gluten Meal (9-0-0): made by various companies; available at most garden centers; also serves to stop seeds from germinating (great for weed prevention)

Renaissance Lawn Food (6-0-6): made from soybean meal, hydrolyzed feather meal, potassium sulfate, and bone meal; available through Marshall Landscape (313-885-7272)