



Correct Usage of Fertilizers

Misapplication of fertilizer is the most frequent cause of surface water and groundwater contamination. Excessive watering or a rainstorm can wash away the chemical excess—wasting your money and endangering nearby waterways. Stormwater from the City of Ferris drains into the Upper Trinity River. Nitrogen and phosphorus compounds in fertilizers can contribute to the growth of algae in the river. The following recommended practices can reduce the risk of pollution.

- Apply fertilizers only when necessary.
- Apply fertilizers according to the label's directions and only to plants that are specified on the label. Only use the recommended amount of fertilizer.
- Apply fertilizer as close as possible to the period of maximum uptake and growth for grass and other plants, which is usually early and late summer in warm climates.
- Avoid applying fertilizer close to waterways.
- Do not overwater lawns and gardens. Use a soaker hose that releases water directly to the ground, which reduces the risk of washing fertilizer away from the application site.
- Fill fertilizer spreaders on a hard surface so that any spills can be easily cleaned up.
- Properly store unused fertilizer and properly dispose of empty containers.
- After mowing, leave grass clippings on your lawn. These clippings act as a slow-release fertilizer for your grass.
- Apply mulch around trees and shrubs, reducing the need for fertilizers.

Correct Usage of Pesticides

Incorrect usage of pesticides may contribute to stormwater pollution. If pesticides must be used, observe the following practices to minimize their impact on the environment:

- Use the least-toxic pesticide first. Always read the label and follow the instructions of any pesticide you choose.
- Avoid applying broad-spectrum pesticides; they destroy beneficial insects as well as pests, leaving trees or shrubs unprotected if pests return.
- Apply pesticides only to plants that are specified on the label. Some formulations injure tender ornamental plants and new growth.
- Mix pesticides according to their directions and apply only the recommended dosage.
- Avoid systemic pesticides on vegetables and other edible plants. Systemic pesticides are taken up by the plant, making its tissues and fluids toxic to feeding pests and unsafe for human consumption.
- For best results, apply non-systemic pesticides to all infested plant surfaces. Non-systemic pesticides must come into direct contact with the insects in order to work.
- Avoid the overuse of chemicals. Many pests have become resistant to certain pesticides.

In most cases, disposing of leftover or unwanted pesticides in the regular trash is acceptable. However, there may be other disposal options. Consider taking these kinds of items to a household hazardous waste facility for disposal.