

New Michigan Law Restricts Phosphorus Fertilizers: Use Phosphorus-Free Fertilizer

Protecting Water Quality

Phosphorus is a naturally occurring essential nutrient for plant and animal growth. It is also a primary water quality concern in Michigan. When excess phosphorus is applied on land, it may run into nearby lakes, rivers and streams. This runoff can lead to increased algae and aquatic plant growth which can have negative effects on water quality, fisheries, recreation, and property values. By restricting unnecessary phosphorus applications, the phosphorus law will help maintain and protect Michigan's vast water resources.

The Fertilizer Law

Michigan Fertilizer Law (1994 PA 451, Part 85, Fertilizers) restricts the use of phosphorus fertilizers on residential and commercial lawns, including athletic fields and golf courses statewide. Both homeowners and commercial applicators must follow the phosphorus application restrictions. However, there are a few exceptions. For exceptions visit www.michigan.gov/mda-fertilizer.



What Fertilizers do I Use?

Look for lawn fertilizers with zero phosphorus in them. On the bag or box of fertilizer is a row of three numbers. These numbers indicate the amount of total nitrogen (N), available phosphate (P₂O₅) and soluble potash (K₂O) in the particular product. The middle number is available phosphate and should read "0".

Where Can I Find Phosphorus-free Fertilizers?

A majority of garden centers, hardware stores, and large chain stores carry phosphorus free lawn fertilizers.

Article information courtesy of the Michigan Department of Agriculture & Rural Development.

