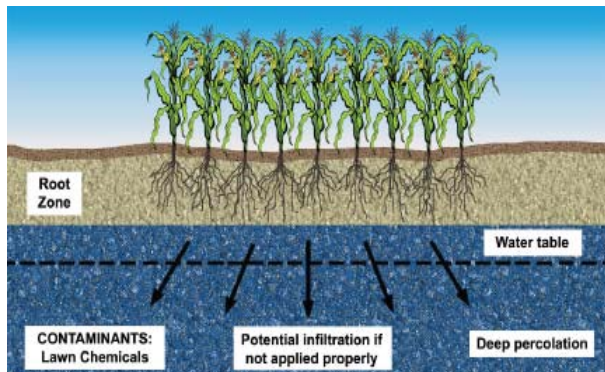


## Why does it matter how much fertilizer and pesticide I add to my lawn? How much effect can one home have on the environment?

Your lawn probably covers a small piece of land. Combined with other homeowners, however, the environmental contamination can present a major problem.

Because the majority of Idaho's drinking water supply comes from ground water, over-application of fertilizers and pesticides can move hazardous chemicals through the soil and into drinking water, adversely affecting human health. Over-application of fertilizers and pesticides can also harm surface waters if chemicals run off into lakes and streams and can damage your lawn as well.



Properly using home lawn chemicals can make a difference and set an example for homeowners around you. This list of tips and facts will help you attain a beautiful *and* environmentally friendly lawn.

## For More Information

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1410 N. Hilton  
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### Boise Regional Office

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### Coeur d'Alene Regional Office

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### Lewiston Regional Office

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### Twin Falls Regional Office

1363 Fillmore Street  
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(208) 736-2190  
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### Pocatello Regional Office

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### Idaho Falls Regional Office

900 N. Skyline, Suite B  
Idaho Falls, ID 83402  
(208) 528-2650  
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### U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

[www.epa.gov](http://www.epa.gov)

### University of Idaho Extension Service

[www.ag.uidaho.edu/mg/](http://www.ag.uidaho.edu/mg/)

### Gardening Best Management Practices

[www.uidaho.edu/wq/wqbr/wqbr29.html](http://www.uidaho.edu/wq/wqbr/wqbr29.html)

### Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts

[www.iascd.state.id.us/](http://www.iascd.state.id.us/)

### Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

[www.deq.idaho.gov/multimedia\\_assistance/citizens.cfm](http://www.deq.idaho.gov/multimedia_assistance/citizens.cfm)

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## Water in Idaho

# Fertilizer & Pesticide Use at Home

## How to have a beautiful lawn *and* protect the environment



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## Fertilizer Use

Fertilizer provides nutrients—usually nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium—to lawns and gardens. In the proper quantity and proportion, these nutrients can help produce a healthy lawn and plants. If fertilizer is over-applied or the wrong combination of nutrients is added, plants may not fully absorb all of the nutrients. These excess nutrients can build up in the soil or filter into ground and surface waters, adversely impacting water quality.



### Here's how you can help

- **Fertilize your lawn...not your driveway.** Apply fertilizer so that it lands on your lawn or garden, not on adjacent pavement. Fertilizer that lands on paved surfaces wastes money and can end up in Idaho's waterways. If fertilizer lands on the pavement, sweep it onto the lawn.
- **Pick a product with appropriate proportions of the nutrients** your lawn needs. Fertilizers are labeled according to the percentage of each nutrient.
- **Minimize nitrogen use.** Excess nitrogen can contaminate ground water and harm animals and humans, particularly small children.
- **Choose slow-release fertilizers** to minimize chemical loss through the soil and promote uptake by the plant.
- **Look on the back of the bag** for terms such as controlled-release, slow-release, slowly available, or water-insoluble nitrogen.
- **Ask about proper fertilizer application methods.** Make sure your investment is used efficiently. Don't over-apply so that your lawn is not harmed.

- **Plant native grasses and plants** that tend to be adapted to the local environment and may not need supplemental nutrients.
- **Test your lawn's soil.** By determining the characteristics of the soil, you can tell which nutrients are lacking and apply fertilizer more efficiently.

Remember, proper fertilization not only protects Idaho's water, but can reduce money spent on lawn care products and time devoted to lawn care.

## A Healthy Lawn

*Maintaining a healthy carpet of grass may involve use of fertilizers and pesticides. With proper care, you can maximize the benefits of these products while minimizing their adverse effects on the environment.*

## Disposal

Proper waste disposal is a critical final measure toward protecting Idaho's water from lawn care products. To minimize impact from extra product and waste containers:

- ✓ Buy **the least amount** of product needed.
- ✓ **Rinse containers** and use the rinsate as you would the product.
- ✓ **Properly dispose of the container.** Do not use it to store another liquid. Contact your local landfill, waste hauler, or public works department for disposal and recycling options in your area.



## Pesticide Use

A pesticide is any substance or mixture of substances intended to prevent, repel, mitigate, or kill any pest. Pests can be insects, mice and other animals, unwanted plants (weeds), fungi, or microorganisms like bacteria and viruses.

### Here's how to use pesticides wisely

- **Identify the problem.** Different pests require different controls. Using the wrong pesticide could damage the plant or surrounding garden without solving the problem.
- **Try non-toxic controls first.** Many common pests can be cured with non-toxic alternatives. Beer can be used to capture slugs, for example, and soapy water can eliminate many garden pests. Some pests can simply be removed by hand. Refer to an organic gardening book for suggestions.
- If pesticides must be used, **limit application** to the rates specified on the label to prevent over-application.
- Apply **only to the affected part** of the plant.
- **Apply when pests are most vulnerable.** Depending on the pest, applications at night, early morning, or after watering may be most effective.
- **Make a habit of inspecting your lawn for pests.** Catching a problem early reduces the amount of pesticide needed and prevents storage and disposal problems.
- If using a pest control service, ensure it follows **best management practices**.
- **Read product label and follow instructions.** The label tells you how to use the product safely and effectively. Use of any pesticide in any way that is not consistent with label directions and precautions is illegal. It can also be ineffective, harmful to the environment, and potentially dangerous.