

## ENVIRONMENTAL TIP #40



**DID YOU KNOW** that when it rains, the rain washes fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides into stormdrains, which ultimately carry runoff into the Corsica River? In addition to degrading the water quality of our streams and rivers, pesticides can kill critters in the stream and fertilizers can cause algal blooms, which rob our waterways of oxygen that fish need to survive.

Many homeowners are unaware of the actual nutrient needs of their lawns. A soil test should be performed to determine whether fertilizer is even needed. Organ lawn care practices (no chemical pesticides and fertilizers) can be a wise environmental choice and will save you money. Conduct a soil test on your lawn and follow the practices below to reduce the need to fertilize on your lawn and garden.

- **Never fertilize before a rain storm (the pollutants are picked up by stormwater during rain events).**
- **Keep fertilizer off paved surfaces – sidewalks, driveways, etc.**
- **Use commercially available compost or make your own using garden waste.**
- **Let your grass clippings lay. Don't bag the grass. Use a mulching lawn mower to cut one-third of the blade length each week and naturally fertilize your lawn in the process.**
- **Maintain a buffer strip of unmowed natural vegetation bordering waterways and ponds to trap excess fertilizers and sediment from lawns and gardens.**
- **Grow an organic garden (no pesticides or fertilizers). Visit [www.organiclandscape.org](http://www.organiclandscape.org)**

**Always remember that what we do on land affects the Corsica River and the Chesapeake Bay – [www.corsicariver.com](http://www.corsicariver.com)**