Masser, Michelle

From: Lashway, Lisa
Sent: Friday, April 19, 2013 2:07 PM
To: Canning, Sean; Masser, Michelle
Subject: FW: NJDEP Press Release - Landmark Fertilizer Law
Attachments: Fertilizer Law P38.pdf

Lisa Lashway
Mt. Olive Twp. Clerk
973-691-0900 Ext. 7291
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PO Box 450
Budd Lake, NJ 07828

From: Rogers, Joseph [mailto:Joseph.Rogers@dep.state.nj.us]
Sent: Friday, April 19, 2013 2:04 PM
To: Rogers, Joseph
Cc: Randazzo, Cindy
Subject: NJDEP Press Release - Landmark Fertilizer Law

Dear Municipal Clerk:

Please see that attached NJDEP Press Release concerning the implementation of a Landmark Fertilizer Law.

If you have any questions, please contact Cindy Randazzo at 609-633-7700.

Sincerely,

Joe Rogers, Program Coordinator
Local Government Assistance

Joseph.rogers@dep.state.nj.us

NEWS

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection
P. O. Box 402, Trenton, New Jersey 08625-0402
www.state.nj.us/dep

Bob Martin, Commissioner

IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
April 19, 2013

CONTACT: Lawrence Ragonese (609) 292-2994
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CHRISTIE ADMINISTRATION FULLY IMPLEMENTS LANDMARK FERTILIZER LAW TO REDUCE POLLUTION AND KEEP WATERWAYS CLEAN

Law is Part of Governor Christie's Barnegat Bay Action Plan

(13/P38) TRENTON — The Christie Administration's law aimed at reducing pollution from lawn fertilizers is now being fully implemented this lawn care season, with reformulated products designed to reduce environmental impacts now available through stores and suppliers across New Jersey.

The Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is encouraging residents as they clean out flower beds, spread mulch and tune up mowers this spring to take a few minutes to become knowledgeable about the reformulated fertilizers and learn how to take other steps to reduce the impacts of poor lawn care practices on the environment.

The first phase of the fertilizer law, signed by Governor Christie on January 5, 2011 as part of his Comprehensive Barnegat Bay Action Plan, required the use of best management practices to reduce the impacts of fertilizers on waterways and development of public outreach. The second phase initiated the creation of a certification program for professional fertilizer applicators and lawn care providers.

Now the third phase has kicked in, with manufacturers providing fertilizers with reduced nitrogen and zero phosphorous content for use in most typical lawn care situations. There are exceptions, including when establishing or repairing turf or when a soil test indicates the need for phosphorous. The law applies only to lawn fertilizers, not those used in gardens.

"The sale and use of reformulated lawn fertilizer products is now mandatory throughout the state," said Michele Siekerka, DEP Assistant Commissioner for Water Resource Management. "These products are better for the environment and are still good for your lawn. Using them and using them properly is the responsible thing to do."

Nitrogen and phosphorus are nutrients required for plant growth. A limited amount of these nutrients is important for healthy plant life. An overabundance, however, can be unhealthy for lawns. These nutrients when carried by storm water into lakes, rivers and streams, can stimulate excessive algae and aquatic weed growth, reducing dissolved oxygen and sunlight needed for healthy aquatic life.

"Now is a good time to assess all of your spring gardening practices, including looking for ways to reduce the amount of chemicals you use in your yard and exploring ways, such as using drought-tolerant plants, to reduce water use," Assistant Commissioner Siekerka said. "As residents rebuild from Superstorm Sandy, now is a good time to consider replacing your traditional lawn with native, drought-tolerant plants."

Here are some helpful tips:

- Read fertilizer labels. All fertilizer products for turf must contain at least 20 percent slow-release nitrogen and zero percent phosphorus, unless a soil test demonstrates a need for more. Check the first and second number on the package for nitrogen and phosphate content (formula 26-0-3 for example, means no phosphate).

- Hiring a certified fertilizer applicator can help ensure the proper use of fertilizers. All professional fertilizer applicators and lawn care providers are now required to undergo training and become certified through the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station at Rutgers University.

- If you do apply fertilizer yourself, read and follow directions carefully. Use the proper spreader setting. Do not apply fertilizer if a heavy rain is expected. Sweep up excess fertilizer; and use proper fertilizing equipment. Additional information is available at the resource links provided below.

- Conserve water. Do not over water your lawn. Adjust sprinklers if water runs into the gutter. Water during cooler times of the day.

- Identify pests before spraying pesticides. Ask a specialist at your garden center for advice on how to treat for that specific pest. Use integrated pest management (IPM) methods to minimize chemical use in your garden. Many IPM methods do not even require the use of chemical pesticides.

- Reduce the amount of grass by planting ground cover. This reduces the need for fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides.

- Use natural pesticides such as milky spore and nematodes wherever possible. If you must use chemical pesticides, use them sparingly and in targeted areas.

- Have your lawn tested at the county Rutgers Cooperative Research and Extension office to determine if you need to fertilize. If so, use natural and slow-release nitrogen fertilizers and make sure to follow the manufacturer's directions. Never apply to your lawn or garden if the weather calls for rain.

- Use a mulching mower instead of bagging grass clippings to reduce lawn wastes and to reduce the need for fertilizer. Do not put loose leaves or grass clippings in the street. Use them in a compost pile as a source for enriched soil. If you do need to dispose of leaves or grass clippings, contact your municipality to determine the appropriate method to dispose these wastes.

- If you must use herbicides, apply them directly to the weeds rather than broadcasting if possible. A healthy lawn will reduce weed growth.

- Use mulch on flower beds and gardens to prevent weeds from growing and to help absorb water.

- Use drought-resistant native plants in gardens and beds. These plants require less fertilizer and less water, thereby reducing the amount of potential polluted runoff.

"The DEP would like to recognize the members of the Healthy Lawns Healthy Waters Workgroup and the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station at Rutgers University for their continued cooperation, guidance and support with implementing the state's new fertilizer law,'' said Kerry Pflugh, Manager of DEP's Office of Constituent Services.

"We also give two green thumbs up to the companies, fertilizer applicators, homeowners and property owners who are already complying with this law and helping to keep it green and keep it clean," she said.

To learn more about New Jersey's fertilizer law, including an explanation of exceptions, acceptable application rates, and acceptable application periods, go to www.nj.gov/dep/healthylawnshealthywater .

To learn more about the new fertilizer law and its benefits, please visit: www.nj.gov/dep/barnegatbay/plan-nutrientpollution.htm.

To learn more about Governor Christie's Action Plan for Barnegat Bay, visit www.nj.gov/dep/barnegatbay/

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