



# FACT SHEET

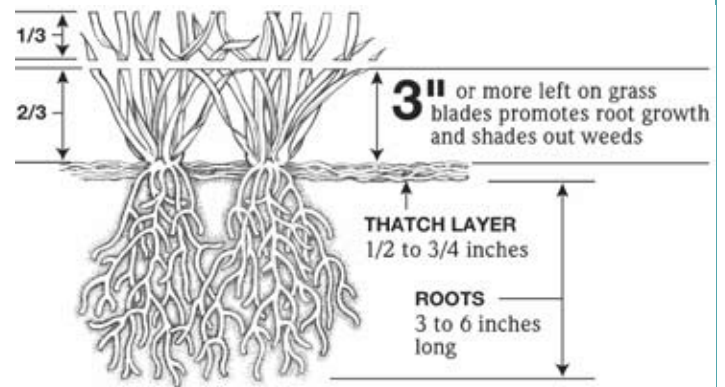
GUIDE NO. 16  
RIVER FRIENDLY LAWN & GARDEN CARE



*Everything we put on our lawns has the potential to be washed into a storm drain then directly into the Rouge River without treatment.*

The methods that we use to keep a beautiful lawn and garden have direct effect on the Rouge River. Everything that we put on our lawns has the potential

fertilizer because they are packed with essential nutrients plus they provide organic matter which reduces soil compaction and promotes root growth.



to be washed into a storm drain and directed into the Rouge River without treatment so before you begin your lawn care regimen, consider these river friendly tips.

**Build fertile soils with organic matter such as compost or mulch.** Use mulch (shredded leaves, grass clippings or compost) around plants and on the soil to resist weeds and retain moisture. Compost is available at no cost to Plymouth Township residents at the Public Services building located at 46555 Port Street.

**Select plants suited for the site and climate conditions with an emphasis on native plants.** See Fact Sheet #9 or visit the native plant section of our web site for more information.

**Try grass cycling.** Mow your grass at a height of three (3) inches and let the short grass blades fall back onto the lawn. Grass clippings are an ideal

**Reduce the use of insecticides, herbicides and other pesticides on your lawn or in your garden.**

Spot treatments make better sense economically and environmentally. Remember, not all insects are harmful; some are beneficial and necessary for pollination!



*If your yard is maintained by a lawn service, find out what practices they use and encourage them to utilize some of the practices mentioned in this fact sheet.*



CHARTER TOWNSHIP OF PLYMOUTH

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**Use slow release fertilizers.** If you must fertilize, please select a slow-release fertilizer to promote steady, uniform growth. Because these types of fertilizers release nitrogen slowly they reduce or even eliminate the need for additional applications saving you time and money! Wayne County has partnered with local hardware and nurseries to label fertilizers on the shelves that are river friendly.

### How can fertilizer be harmful to the Rouge River?

Excess fertilizers from our lawns are washed into the storm drains and flow directly into the Rouge River. Once in the river fertilizers, especially those high in phosphorous, can produce hundreds of pounds of weeds and algae that compete with other aquatic life for oxygen.

As these aquatic plants die, micro-organisms use the organic matter as a food source. These micro-organisms then grow and reproduce and use up the oxygen in the water. Any increase in the amount of aquatic plant growth ultimately will result in a reduced dissolved oxygen content of the water body, eventually suffocating fish and negatively impacting water quality.\*

\* Information from North Dakota State University



*The most cost effective way to a healthy river is through prevention rather than remediation.*

**An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure.**

The Clean Water Act states that we must clean up polluted waterways and work to keep our healthy waterways clean.

Remember: The most cost effective way to a healthy river is through

prevention rather than remediation.

Water conservation doesn't have to mean a less appealing lawn. Fact Sheet 1 and our annual Water Quality Report describe the best approach to watering your lawn.

Visit these web sites for more information:

[www.waynecounty.com](http://www.waynecounty.com)

[www.plymouthtp.org/community/rouge\\_river/pollution\\_prevention](http://www.plymouthtp.org/community/rouge_river/pollution_prevention)

[www.therouge.org/](http://www.therouge.org/)

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 FOR GREEN GRASS and WATER QUALITY PROTECTION

- Slow-release nitrogen
- Low or no phosphorus
- Free of pesticides

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[www.rougeriver.com](http://www.rougeriver.com)  
 Funded through the Rouge River National Wet Weather Demonstration Project

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