

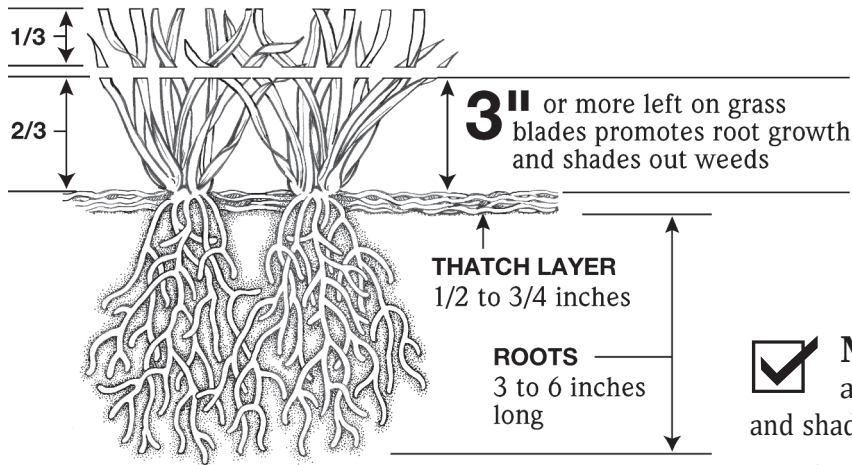
# HealthyLawn CARE TIPS



Hamburg Township, 10405 Merrill Rd, Hamburg, Michigan 48139, 810-222-1166

## Cut It High...Let It Lie!

Updated April 2023



### For further information...

MSU Extension-Livingston County

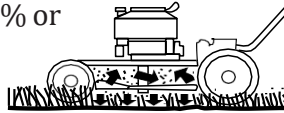
<https://www.canr.msu.edu/livingston/county-extension-office>

Contact: 517-546-3950 or email [msue.livingston@county.msu.edu](mailto:msue.livingston@county.msu.edu)

## Healthy Lawn Checklist

### ✓ Mulch Your Grass Clippings and Leaves

Clippings & leaves are a source of nitrogen and carbon. Mulching them onto your lawn will reduce your fertilizer use by 25% or More each season. Clippings do not cause thatch!



### ✓ Test Soil for Nutrients & Organic Matter Content.

Michigan State University offers a soil test kit as a self-mailer for \$26.00. Customers purchase the box, send the sample via mail to the MSU soil test lab, and receive results via e-mail. The customer then references an MSU website to obtain specific fertilizer recommendations. The self-mailer soil test kit is available from the MSU bookstore (<https://shop.msu.edu/collections/garden-lawn/products/bulletin-e3154>) or Livingston Country MSU Extension (517-546-3950).

### ✓ Build Soil Organic Matter – to 5% or More.

Healthy soil has 5% or more organic matter. Organic matter provides a natural reservoir of nutrients and holds water. Do a soil test every one to three years.

**Flip-See back.**

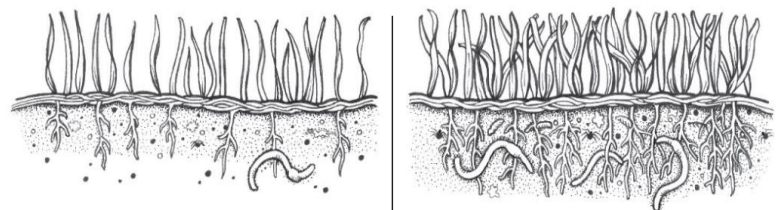
✓ **Mow High.** Leave 3-4 inches on the grass blade after cutting. Tall grass promotes root growth and shades out weeds.

✓ **Aerate Compacted Soil.** Use a core aerator to remove finger-like plugs of grass and soil – or hire a landscape service. Aeration improves drainage and allows water and oxygen to reach grass roots.

✓ **Rake Compost into the Lawn.** Rake 1/2 inch of matured compost into an established lawn. Leave half of the grass blade exposed to sunlight and air. Compost adds microorganisms, nutrients and organic matter, helping to build soil fertility.

✓ **Water the Lawn to Minimize Stress.** A green lawn in Michigan needs .5 to 1.5 inches of water per week. Don't soak your lawn; watering should not produce puddles. Light, frequent watering which reaches the grass roots is recommended by Michigan State University. Lawn dormancy is a natural response to drought. However, some water may be necessary during an extended drought of more than a month.

### HEALTHY SOIL HAS HIGH ORGANIC MATTER



LOW ORGANIC

HIGH ORGANIC

- ✓ **Select Earth-Friendly Fertilizers.** Earth-friendly fertilizers meet state requirements for no phosphorus. Slow-release nitrogen protects water quality and supports healthy grass.

For a list of recommended fertilizers, see [www.socwa.org/documents/nature/EFertList2016.pdf](http://www.socwa.org/documents/nature/EFertList2016.pdf).



- ✓ **Fertilize in the Fall for Best Results. Do Not Fertilize Before May.** Fall

fertilization builds grass roots. Additional fertilizer before May is rarely needed. Do not spread fertilizer if the ground is frozen.

- ✓ **Sweep Fertilizer from Paved Surfaces.** Fertilizer left on sidewalks and driveways can easily wash into storm drains, rivers, and lakes. Sweep fertilizer pellets back onto the lawn.

- ✓ **Mow Dry Leaves.** In the Fall, mow dry leaves into the lawn. A shallow layer of leaf fragments will decompose quickly and contribute organic matter and nutrients to the soil system.

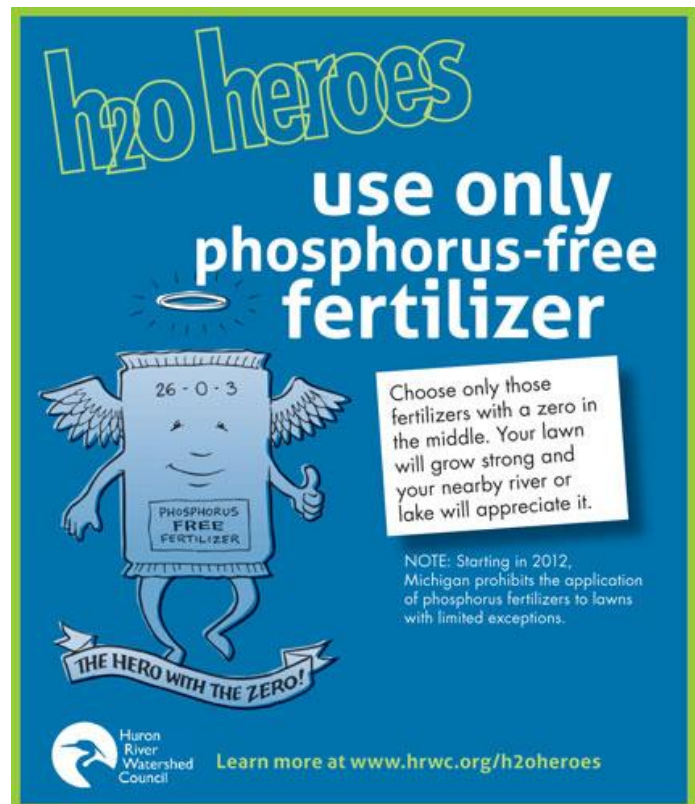
- ✓ **Leave a “No Fertilizer” Buffer Zone Near Lakes and Rivers.** A “no fertilizer” buffer of 50 feet or more is recommended by many water quality experts. Hamburg Township Ordinance requires a 100-ft natural vegetative strip for Natural Rivers (Consider planting native grasses, native wildflowers, and shrubs in place of turf grass.) Keeps geese away!

- ✓ **Avoid Weed-and-Feed Combination Products.** Combination fertilizer and weed control products often add unnecessary herbicides to the water. Herbicides may pose a threat to animals, plants and insects beyond the intended weeds or pests. Instead, spot treat or hand dig weeds. Spot apply insecticide when the pest emerges in their life cycle.

- ✓ **Practice IPM – Integrated Pest Management.** Identify the weed or insect of concern and select the least toxic control option. Read the label and follow directions – the label is the law. Telephone the National Pesticide Information Center (NPIC) at 1-800-858-7378 for chemical impact information.

- ✓ **Select a Lawn Service that Offers the Healthy Lawn Care Program for Watershed Protection.** Some lawn service providers have been endorsed by the Michigan Green Industry Association (MGIA) to offer the “Healthy Lawn Care Program for Watershed Protection” to their customers. For a list of endorsed companies, contact MGIA at (248-646-4992) <https://www.landscape.org/healthylawn>

Under this lawn care program option, fertilizers and pesticides are REDUCED to levels that sustain healthy turf and help protect water quality. Lawn care programs are tailored to the specific needs of the landscape –rather than an “automatic” application of inputs.



**Healthy Lawn and Garden Resources:**

- Southeast Oakland Co. Water Authority-
  - [http://www.socwa.org/lawns\\_gardens.shtml](http://www.socwa.org/lawns_gardens.shtml)
- Huron River Watershed Council-
  - <https://www.hrwc.org/take-action/at-home/riverfront-lakeshore-properties/>
- Michigan State University Extension-
  - [Use Phosphorus Free Fertilizers](#) flyer

This flyer was designed by SOCWA (Southeast Oakland County Water Authority) funding through a grant from the Rouge River National Wet Weather Demonstration Program (U.S. EPA Grant# XP-995743-09) revised by Lisa Perschke Advanced Master Gardener and Advanced Master Composter, [lperschke@hamburg.mi.us](mailto:lperschke@hamburg.mi.us)