

TOWN OF MERRILLVILLE

STORMWATER & RESIDENTIAL LAWNS



Merrillville Stormwater Utility

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http://www.merrillville.in.gov/departments/stormwater_management

Fertilizer Application

When it comes to fertilizer, more is not better. In fact over applying fertilizers can have many negative results. Research shows that only modest levels of nitrogen are required for good color and controlled growth. Too much fertilizer can cause rapid growth resulting in the need for more mowing. Also, excess fertilizer runoff after rain events pollute our stormwater. Here are a few tips for proper fertilizer application:

- Utilize slow-release organic fertilizers which are less likely to enter stormwater.
- Conduct a soil test to determine needs for fertilizer applications.
- Do not apply fertilizer on windy days or immediately before heavy rains.
- Apply fertilizer at or below those rates recommended on the packaging.
- Apply fertilizers evenly over desired areas.
- Sweep up and remove fertilizers spilled on paved surfaces.
- Hire reputable lawn care companies.
- Properly dispose of all excess fertilizer and containers.



Basic Mowing Tips

- **DO NOT BLOW GRASS CLIPPINGS INTO THE ROADWAYS!**

These clippings ultimately wash into storm drains creating drainage issues.

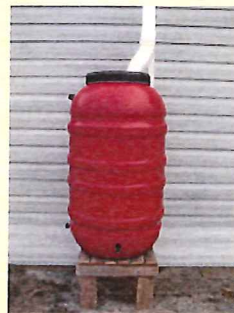
- Remove grass catcher and add a mulching blade.
- Keep your grass mowed to 2"-3" tall.
- Mow when grass is dry.
- Keep your blade sharp.



Watering

Indiana has a high enough precipitation rate, so turf grass in Merrillville does not have to be routinely watered unless we experience periods of severe drought. Therefore, you can save time and money by conserving resources and allowing Mother Nature to water your lawn. Rain water harvesting is also becoming a more popular form of irrigation. The most common practice is a **rain barrel** which collects stormwater from downspouts.

- Do not water unless your grass really needs it.
- Water deeply and less frequently to encourage deep root growth.
- The best time to water is in the morning.
- Install a rain barrel.
- Merrillville residents can order rain barrels at: www.upcycle-products.com



Reducing Waste, Less is More!

Simple grass waste reduction practices can save you time and money. It takes effort to bag grass clippings every time you mow, not to mention disposal. You can maintain a healthy green lawn by **leaving grass clippings where they fall** allowing them to decompose and act as a natural fertilizer. This returns valuable nutrients to the soil and reduces the application of commercial fertilizers.

By recycling grass clippings back into your lawn, you can reduce mowing time by up to 40% since you won't spend time with bagging and disposal. You will also save money by not using trash bags. Overall this reduces disposal costs and helps the environment by reducing waste. By removing your grass catcher and installing a mulching blade, you can make your weekly mowing quicker and cheaper.

Also consider planting ground covers in select areas such as english ivy, pachysandra, and periwinkle; increasing shrub beds; or growing a wildflower meadow or **rain garden** as alternatives to turf grass. They look beautiful and don't need mowing which will reduce lawn maintenance and yard waste.

