

## **FACTS ABOUT PHOSPHORUS FERTILIZERS FROM HENNEPIN COUNTY WATER QUALITY**

Homeowners in the Twin Cities Metropolitan area apply over six million pounds of phosphorus in fertilizer applications on lawns each year. It takes only one pound of phosphorus to grow 500 pounds of algae. The unfortunate thing about all this fertilizer use is that in most cases it is unnecessary. Soil tests around the metro area have shown that most lawns, almost 70%, have high levels of phosphorus and do not need any additional phosphorus fertilizer.

A lot of phosphorus applied as fertilizer is spilling out of our lawns. The soil particles can only hold so much before the excess begins to run off. We can all help to improve our lakes, streams and wetlands by doing the following:

- Have a soil test done on your lawn before adding fertilizer. For a free test kit, call the County Extension Service at 651-374-8400.
- Aerate you lawn each year.
- If you fertilize, do it in the fall and sweep up any granules that land on hard surface.
- Keep grass clippings and leaves off of the street so it cannot wash into the wetlands and lakes.

The make-up of all fertilizers is indicated by a series of three numbers on the package. The middle number indicates the amount of phosphorus the fertilizer contains. Phosphorus Free Fertilizers will have a "0" for the middle number, i.e. 10-0-10.