

## Things to look for in your lawn maintenance company

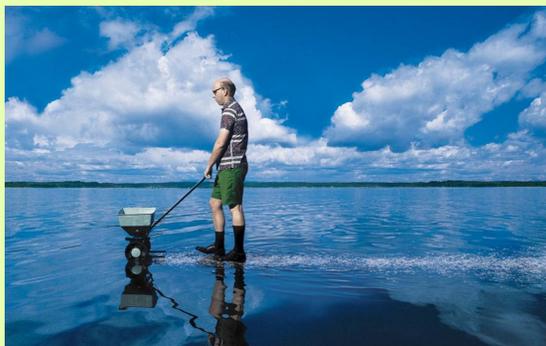
### Do they ...

- Have the required Training Certification? Certified applicators are permitted to apply fertilizers in accordance with the UMass Best Management Practices for Soil & Nutrient Management in Turf Systems, and not the more restrictive town performance standards.
- Test your soil? This test will indicate the amount of fertilizer needed. The soil test will also indicate the need for lime, which acts as the gatekeeper of soil nutrients.
- Use a minimum 20% slow-release nitrogen fertilizer product?
- Apply no more than the maximum allowable amounts of nitrogen?
- Observe the ban on applying fertilizer from November 12th to April 14th?
- Observe the phosphorus restrictions/ban?
- Use a deflector shield on all broadcast fertilizer spreaders?
- Promote the benefits of low maintenance, native plantings around water bodies?
- Maintain a 100' fertilizer-free zone around water bodies and wetlands?

Remember the ocean begins at your house!

For more “green” lawn tips go to:

**[www.greenscapes.org](http://www.greenscapes.org)**  
**[extension.umass.edu/turf/](http://extension.umass.edu/turf/)**



The complete Chatham regulation is available at:  
**[http://chatham-ma.gov/Public\\_Documents/ChathamMA\\_Health/Regulations/FinalFertReg021215](http://chatham-ma.gov/Public_Documents/ChathamMA_Health/Regulations/FinalFertReg021215)**

### References:

- \**Greenscapes Guide; Fertilizing Alternatives*, [www.greenscapes.org](http://www.greenscapes.org).
- \**UMASS Extension Service: Turf Program*, [www.extension.umass.edu/turf](http://www.extension.umass.edu/turf)
- \**Buzzards Bay National Estuary Program* [buzzardsbay.org/lawncare.htm](http://buzzardsbay.org/lawncare.htm)

**CHATHAM BOARD OF HEALTH**  
Department of Natural Resources  
[www.chatham-ma.gov](http://www.chatham-ma.gov)  
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TOWN OF CHATHAM  
DEPARTMENT OF  
NATURAL RESOURCES

## WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW: CHATHAM BOARD OF HEALTH FERTILIZER USE REGULATION



## FERTILIZER ALTERNATIVES

Save money, let nature provide the nutrients...

Lawns need much less fertilizer than advertised. What is not absorbed is washed away as storm water runoff polluting our ponds and embayments. This can cause algal blooms making swimming and boating unpleasant and kill fish and animals. Fertilizer not taken up by plants can leach into our groundwater and contaminate our drinking water.

**Save time *and* money by using these guidelines for a lawn that is healthy and easy to maintain**

- Have your soil tested: find out the pH of your soil at the University of Massachusetts soil lab.  
[www.extension.umass.edu/turf/services/soil-testing](http://www.extension.umass.edu/turf/services/soil-testing)
- Add lime if your soil is acidic: your soil pH should be between 6.0 and 7.0
- Leave grass clippings on the lawn. Mulching mowers add nitrogen and organic matter back to the soil.
- Top dress with compost in the spring if your soil needs nutrients.
- Clover is a great free source of nutrients. It is a great addition to any lawn because it is a hardy perennial that smothers weeds and “fixes” nitrogen in the soil.
- If necessary, use organic fertilizer in the fall, if at all. Don’t feed the weeds.

## FERTILIZER REGULATION

The Chatham Board of Health’s Regulation on the Content and Application of Fertilizer took effect on February 12, 2015. **The intent of the Regulation is to address a source of nutrient enrichment to local waters that results in degraded water quality.**

### Highlights include:

- A ban on fertilizer on lawns between November 12th and April 14th of each year.
- Nitrogen fertilizer limited to 1 lb./1000 SF. per application, not to exceed 3.2 lbs. per year.
- Nitrogen fertilizer shall be at least 20% slow release nitrogen (SRN).
- A ban on products containing phosphorous except in certain circumstances.
- Fertilizer shall not be applied during or prior to heavy rain or onto impervious surfaces (roads, walkways etc.).
- Fertilizer applied to home gardens, landscape ornamentals, shrubs, trees, bushes, vegetable gardens, container plants, and agricultural use are exempt.

## Use the right grass

Native grasses (or drought and disease tolerant species) require less water, fertilizer, and pesticides than non-native species. In sandy soil areas around the shoreline, plant a mix of fine-leaved or red fescues and perennial rye grass. These seed mixtures are low maintenance, easy to grow, drought resistant, and require less fertilizer than other grasses. Local garden stores often sell this grass mixture as a "Cape Cod" seed mix. Other species like Kentucky Blue Grass may require twice as much water, fertilizer and maintenance to keep green.

