



For Release: Tuesday, July 8, 2014

DEC Reminds New Yorkers Of State Law Restricting Use Of Lawn Fertilizers Containing Phosphorus

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is reminding New Yorkers not to use lawn fertilizers that contain phosphorus. The 2012 Dishwasher Detergent and Nutrient Runoff Law prohibits the use of phosphorus fertilizers unless a new lawn is being established or a soil test shows that the lawn does not have enough phosphorus.

"Too much phosphorus is harmful to the state's water resources," said DEC Commissioner Joe Martens. "Rain and snow runoff carries phosphorus to ponds, rivers, lakes and streams. Once in the water, phosphorus can cause algae that turn waterbodies green, degrading drinking water and using up vital oxygen that fish need to breathe. We are asking New Yorkers to continue to exercise good environmental stewardship."

Consumers should review bag labels for phosphorus content when shopping for fertilizer. Fertilizer labels have three bold numbers. The number in the middle is the percentage of phosphorus in the product, such as: 22-0-15. The law requires retailers to display phosphorus fertilizer separately from phosphorus-free fertilizer and post signs notifying customers of the terms of the law.

The 2012 Dishwasher Detergent and Nutrient Runoff Law does not affect agricultural fertilizer or fertilizer for gardens.

Additional provisions of the nutrient runoff law include: applying any fertilizer containing nitrogen, phosphorus or potassium on lawns or non-agricultural turf is prohibited between December 1 and April 1, and applying any fertilizer on lawns or non-agricultural turf within 20 feet of a waterbody is restricted and application on paved surfaces is prohibited.

Find the full text of the NYS Dishwasher Detergent and Nutrient Runoff Law, Frequently Asked Questions, and a downloadable sign for retail display on DEC's website.