



what's in your **SOIL?**

ARE YOU OVER-FERTILIZING?

Soil testing is the process of analyzing the nutrients present in a soil sample to take the guesswork out of buying fertilizers and help homeowners to avoid using too much fertilizer, which can be an unnecessary expense and an environmental hazard. County extension offices provide soil testing services to residents for a minimal charge.

WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?

Common fertilizers contain the nutrients nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium. These nutrients are essential to maintaining a healthy lawn and garden when used properly; however, applying too much fertilizer can be harmful to your lawn and garden, as well as to local waterways.

When rainwater flows off rooftops to lawns, driveways and streets, it picks up pollutants, including fertilizers, along the way. Storm drains then dump the polluted water into nearby lakes and streams. Excessive nutrients from fertilizers can stimulate algae growth in bodies of water. This harms wildlife and causes problems such as reduced water clarity, habitat destruction and strong odors.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Test your soil on an annual basis

After you receive the soil test results, create an annual schedule for fertilization based on the recommendations and answers to the following questions:

1. What nutrients does my soil need?
2. What type of fertilizer should I use?
3. How much fertilizer should I use?
4. How often should I fertilize?

For more tips on how you can improve
water quality in your community, visit
www.marc.org/water.



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