

GRILL YOUR TURF PRO

Is your lawn care company doing things the right way? If yes, your lawn is in good hands and your money is well spent. If no, your lawn suffers – and so do our waterways.

Good to Know

Excess lawn fertilizer ends up in our local waterways where it causes harm by speeding up the growth of algae blooms. These blooms cause our waterways to become discolored, smelly and undesirable for swimming and boating. Excess fertilizing also wastes your money!

Good to Do

Ask your lawn care provider these five questions from our friends at the Elizabeth River Project to ensure your yard isn't harming local waterways.

1 What kind of fertilizer do you apply?

What proportion of this contains slow-release nitrogen?

Ideally, at least 50% should be a slow-release type fertilizer. Organic fertilizers like compost and kelp are preferred. Fast-release fertilizers promote growth of grass blades at the expense of root development, which weakens your lawn. Plus, the nutrients leach away before they can be used, then wash into our waterways where they contribute to harmful algae blooms.

2 How do you control your rate of fertilizer application?

Your lawn care provider should use a formula to calculate the amount needed based on your yard's acreage and fertilizer application rates. If they don't, they may be over-fertilizing – which wastes money and harms our waterways.

3 How do your recommendations reflect the specific conditions of my lawn?

To avoid over-fertilizing and over-watering, your lawn care company should first conduct a soil test and diagnose the specific needs of your lawn before developing a plan.

4 Do I have warm or cool season grass?

What are the differences in terms of water and fertilizer needs?

If your company can't tell you, they're probably not adjusting their fertilizing and watering plan to meet the specific needs of your yard.

5 What “green” practices do you follow when mowing?

They should leave grass clippings on the lawn to compost as natural fertilizer – and they get extra points if they use an electric mower. Gas mowers are a surprisingly large source of air and water pollution. It's also important to keep mower blades sharp.