Gardening for a Cause – Long Island Sound

Excessive nutrients and chemicals that result, in part, from residential landscaping practices, contribute runoff that is harmful to the nation's estuaries, including Long Island Sound. Adopting even a few of these suggestions can help protect our coastal waters. You CAN make a DIFFERENCE!

Don't use it all if you don't need it. The only way to know if you need fertilizer is to get a soil test: soiltest.uconn.edu/sampling.php

Apply only if needed, only what is needed, to where it is needed, at reduced rates, never on hard surfaces or before a big rain

Consider adding white clover; it's a good source of nitrogen for lawns. “Grass-Cycle” – leave your clippings on the lawn. 46% to 59% of applied nitrogen ends up in clippings, reducing the need for more added nitrogen by 25%-40%.

Apply no more than twice a year: after spring green-up and no later than October 15th. The best one time application is mid-September through mid October.

Slow release fertilizers are best (they feed the soil).

Organic is preferable to petroleum-based inorganics.

Don't use weed and feed products – one size does not fit all. Area treatment vs. broadcast application is best. Use cultural practices (pulling, squishing) or alternative treatments (such as vinegar, or flame). Plant native plants that are adapted to local conditions. Pesticides kill the beneficial soil organisms that keep thatch in check.

How much lawn do you need? Reduce your active lawn area in favor of native plant borders and beds that attract wildlife, help diminish pollution and provide habitat for important insect pollinators. Accept a little damage: only 5% – 25% of bugs are pests in the yard.

Source: New England Regional Nitrogen & Phosphorus Fertilizer and Associated Management Practice Recommendations for Lawns Based on Water Quality Considerations, University of Connecticut, 2017

For More Information:
Judy Preston, Long Island Sound Study Connecticut Outreach Coordinator: judy.preston@uconn.edu, or visit Sound Gardening at LongIslandSoundStudy.net or healthylawnshealthyriver.net