

# Lake Hopatcong Commission “Water Spouts”

Lake Hopatcong Commission  
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## The Lake Hopatcong Commission (LHC) Works With Local Businesses to Promote Lake-Friendly Lawns

**A Green Lawn Can Lead To A Green Lake...**The Lake Hopatcong Commission is working together with local hardware stores and nurseries to make it easier for you to care for your lawn while caring for the lake. Fertilizers promote green, lush lawns, but they also promote a lot of the weed and algae problems that impact the lake's water quality and impede your recreational use of the lake. When fertilizers are applied improperly or excessively, they end up in the lake. But there are measures we can all implement when using fertilizers to make sure that both our lawns and our lake are healthy.

The two main nutrients in lawn fertilizers are phosphorus and nitrogen. Terrestrial plants, including lawn and turf grasses, rely mostly on nitrogen to promote growth. Phosphorus is usually needed in only small amounts. But, a typical bag of lawn fertilizer (27-12-3) contains 12% phosphorus. Unfortunately, in an aquatic environment, lake weeds and algae rely on mostly phosphorus and require very little nitrogen. Just the opposite of a lawn! The problem that arises is that much of the unused phosphorus added to lawns washes off into the lake, subsequently stimulating unwanted algae and weed growth.

But, there is a way to have a green lawn and a blue lake! This involves using a **lake-friendly fertilizer**. Such fertilizers contain zero or very low amounts of phosphorus. You can purchase these fertilizers at any of the local businesses that display the Lake Hopatcong Commission “**Lake-Friendly Fertilizer**” sign or for a list of retailers, visit [www.lakehopatcong.org](http://www.lakehopatcong.org). So help us keep Lake Hopatcong healthy by fertilizing your lawn the lake-friendly way!

### What Else Is Being Done?

*In addition to lawn fertilizers, other phosphorus sources include roadway stormwater runoff and septic leachate. The LHC has initiated an aggressive program to reduce the amount of phosphorus entering the lake from road runoff through the retrofit, upgrade, and maintenance of catch basins. The LHC has promoted septic system maintenance and is supporting the efforts of the surrounding communities to sewer and/or implement septic system maintenance and pump-out. These combined efforts go a long way to improving the water quality, ecology and recreational potential of Lake Hopatcong.*



Look for the zero in the middle on bags of lake-friendly, non-phosphorus fertilizer.

Graphic courtesy of Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance

## Testing Your Soil Fertility... Do I Really Need To Fertilize?

The answer to this questions is easier than you may think. It involves some simple testing of soil pH. Maintaining the pH of your lawn between 6 and 7 optimizes the uptake of nutrients by grasses, thus decreasing the need to apply fertilizer and improving

the uptake of naturally occurring nitrogen and phosphorus.

Soil pH test kits are available at most home and garden stores. In our area, the soils tend to be acidic (the pH is too low). The simple application of lime will increase the fer-

tility of the soil and decrease the need to even apply fertilizers. In addition, modification of the pH will increase the efficiency of the grass to take up any applied fertilizer, saving you time and money. So, take the time to test.

As the state-appointed steward, the LHC protects and preserves Lake Hopatcong and its watershed and to improve the lake's water quality through collaboration with stakeholders, advocacy and public education.

The LHC public meetings are held on the third Monday of the month.

If you need more information about what we are doing to protect, preserve and restore Lake Hopatcong, please attend our monthly meetings or call us at 973-601-1070.