

*Green  
Lawns = Green  
Rivers*

We are drastically over-fertilising our lawns & gardens

Most fertilisers contain phosphates and other nutrients, which eventually find their way into the rivers via the stormwater drainage system or through the soil into groundwater.

Only low levels of phosphorus can be retained in Perth's porous, sandy soils, as they contain low amounts of metals, clay, silt, and organic matter needed to bind the phosphorus. This allows phosphates to become mobile, and a high percentage is then leached into ground and surface waters. This phosphorus then feeds algal blooms in our rivers.

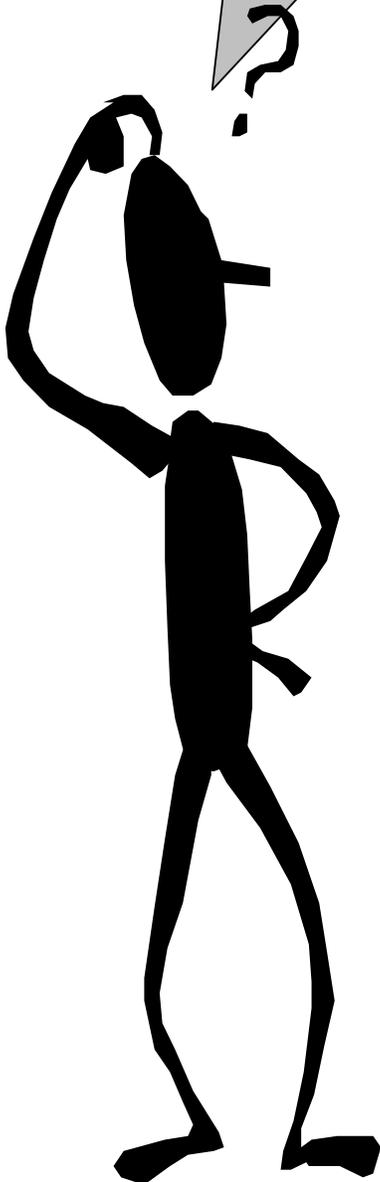
Even in areas of the catchment where soil is heavy clay and phosphorus retention is greater there are still problems. Surface run-off and soil erosion causes the release of phosphorus into the river.

Garden wastes also contain phosphorus that can enter river systems and feed algal blooms.

**HOWEVER, THERE IS HOPE!**

With improved garden practices, phosphorus levels can be reduced dramatically.

Turn page over to find out how...



Fertiliser applications to lawns can be stopped until symptoms of nutrient deficiency occur, such as yellow patches. This may not occur for many years. When it does, it is likely that a light application of a phosphorus free fertiliser is all that is needed.

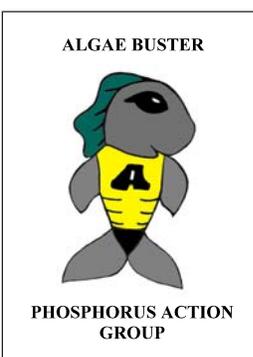
Sweep paved areas rather than hosing them. Prevent soil, grass clippings, leaves and other garden waste from entering street drains as they contain P. Street drains empty into our rivers.

Minimise the use of deciduous trees as their falling leaves may enter street drains contributing to nutrient problems in waterways.

If we do need to apply fertiliser, we should use it sparingly in spring and autumn when grass grows rapidly. Applying it in winter is silly as heavy rains flush fertilisers from soils to waterways. This also wastes fertiliser!

If fertilising garden plants, use organic fertilisers and apply sparingly. Worm farms, composting and mulching of grass clippings and plant wastes recycle nutrients back to gardens. Adding compost and mulch to gardens also improves nutrient and water holding capacity of soils.

Grow plants that are already adapted to our soils and harsh local conditions. That is, grow local native plants rather than European or other exotic plants with high nutrient requirements. After all, local natives save water and attract birds and other wildlife to our gardens.



**Become a volunteer in the campaign to reduce phosphorus levels in our rivers. For more information telephone Amy on 9458 5664.**

