



Lake George Association

People Protecting the Lake Since 1885

NEWS RELEASE

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For IMMEDIATE RELEASE

LGA Recommends Fall Gardening Practices to Protect the Lake

LAKE GEORGE, NY – September 23, 2011 -- The leaves will be falling soon, and area residents will be outside getting their gardens and lawns in shape for next season. As they do so, the Lake George Association (LGA) is reminding property owners in the Lake George watershed about lake-friendly actions they can take this fall to protect the Lake's water quality.

"Most importantly, people need to remember that it is now illegal to apply phosphorus fertilizer in the village and town of Lake George. We have more complete information here at the LGA and are always available to help a homeowner when they have questions," said Emily DeBolt, director of education. "While fall is the best time to fertilize, we strongly urge people to use only phosphorus-free fertilizer, no matter where a property is located within the watershed, and to only fertilize if necessary," she said.

During the fall, property owners can follow these lake-friendly steps to keep the Queen of American Lakes at her best:

- If planting new grass seed, or creating a new garden, minimize the amount of time when the soil is bare. Exposed soil can affect water quality by increasing erosion and runoff, carrying excess soil nutrients or contaminants into water bodies. Fall is also an ideal time to patch any bare spots on your lawn. September is pretty much the end of the time frame for seeding in our area.
- The best window for fall application of fertilizer is after top growth stops, usually after 10 days with average daily temperatures below 50° F. (This should also be about 2 weeks after the last mowing.) This can be anywhere from Halloween to Thanksgiving depending on the year. Roots will continue growing and taking up fertilizer until the ground freezes.
- For higher maintenance lawns, fertilizer applications can be made around Labor Day and/or Memorial Day. But avoid early-spring applications. Research shows that these applications do not really enhance spring green-up compared with late-fall applications.
- Nitrogen is all that grass needs to achieve dense vegetation. (Potassium can lead to an abundance of dandelions.) New recommended concentration levels are lower than before: 3/10 - 5/10 lbs per 1000 square feet. (NOT what the fertilizer bag says.)

- Leave legumes, like white clover, in your lawn to add nitrogen, naturally.
- Rake or blow leaves and clippings away from storm sewers, streams and the Lake. Leaves and clippings are loaded with phosphorus. Algae blooms can flourish in waterways overloaded with phosphorus and decomposing plant materials lower the levels of dissolved oxygen in the water, which can be fatal to fish and other aquatic organisms.
- Instead, consider shredding the leaves and mulching them into the turf to decompose. Alternatively, compost leaves and grass clippings away from roads, streams or shorelines. Mix a ratio of one part clippings to three parts leaves.
- Call your local department of public works if you see a basin or culvert clogged with leaves. They need to flow freely to protect water quality. The LGA Catch Vac can also assist in this effort.
- Now that the weather is cooler, consider replacing an asphalt or concrete paved patio, walkway or driveway with permeable pavers. The pavers allow stormwater to infiltrate directly into the soil, minimizing runoff, the formation of ice in the winter, and the need to apply salt and sand. The LGA has demonstration pavers on its grounds that you can visit.

For more information about how to create lake-friendly landscapes, or to receive on-site technical support, the public can contact the LGA at 518-668-3558. Search the LGA website, www.lakegeorgeassociation.org, for “lake-friendly living” for extensive information on the topic, or subscribe to our lake-friendly living blog on www.lakegeorge.com.

About the LGA

The LGA is a non-profit membership organization of people interested in working together to protect, conserve, and improve the beauty and quality of the Lake George Basin. It is the nation’s oldest lake association. For more information, contact the LGA at (518) 668-3558 or visit the LGA website at www.lakegeorgeassociation.org.



Photo caption: New laws in the village and town of Lake George make it illegal to apply fertilizer containing phosphorus. Studies show that established turf grass in our region already has adequate phosphorus. This healthy Lake George lawn has not received phosphorus fertilizer.



Photo caption: Turf can be replaced with native plants, like these on Lake Avenue in Lake George, which need little or no fertilization, and benefit not only waterways, but wildlife as well.

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