Home Lawn and Garden Phosphorus Fertilizer Regulations

In New York, the Dishwater Detergent and Nutrient Runoff Law became effective in January 2012. This law prohibits the use of phosphorus-containing fertilizers with a phosphate (P2O5) content greater than 0.67%, unless:

- soil tests show a phosphorus deficiency
- the fertilizer is being used to establish new seeded or sodded turf
- the fertilizer being used is an organic compost
- the fertilizer is derived from litter

The law prohibits application of fertilizer onto impervious surfaces. Fertilizer should not be applied within 20 feet of any surface water, modified to 10 feet if the buffer has vegetative cover. An exception to the buffer requirement exists if spreader guards are used. Finally, the law prohibits the application of fertilizers on lawns and non-agricultural turf between December 1 and April 1.

In addition to state regulations, home owners should review their county and town ordinances to determine if stricter restrictions apply to phosphorus fertilizer use and application. For example, a few counties have extended the phosphorus-containing fertilizer restriction from November 1 or November 15 to April 1. Currently, local laws enacted to reduce phosphorus include ones adopted in Westchester, Nassau, Suffolk and Chautauqua counties and the Village of Greenwood Lake.

In addition to restrictions on the use of phosphorus-containing fertilizers, Nutrient Management Plans (NMPs) for those NY counties required to submit plans for impaired waters may restrict the use of nitrogenous fertilizers. Home owners should consult with the local County Cooperative Extension Office, SWCD Office, or County Water Authority to learn if any additional local restrictions apply.

For more information, see:

- NYDEC TMDLs: [http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/23835.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/23835.html)

**SOURCE:** New York State Golf Course Superintendents in partnership with Cornell University [http://nysgolfbmp.cals.cornell.edu](http://nysgolfbmp.cals.cornell.edu)