



# C.R.O.W. JOINT POWERS

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## Press Release

For Immediate Release

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### Which Fertilizer to Choose?

It's that time of the year again to start thinking about lawn and yard care. Many local hardware and retail stores are stocking and displaying bags of fertilizers. Which fertilizer do you choose? Selecting fertilizers with zero phosphorus can help reduce excess phosphorus entering area storm sewers, streams and lakes.

Phosphorus is an important nutrient to help grass grow. However, phosphorus also helps algae and weeds grow in our water systems. Most of the soil in Central Minnesota already has enough phosphorus to maintain a healthy lawn. When too much phosphorus is applied to lawns and gardens it can run off into storm drains, streams, and lakes, reducing water quality by causing algae blooms. Reduction in water quality affects fishing, swimming, and the aesthetic beauty of local lakes and streams. Local Extension Offices offer soil tests to determine how much fertilizer your lawn needs.

The percentage of phosphorus in a particular brand of fertilizer is indicated by the second of three numbers on a bag of fertilizer (e.g. the "0" of a "25-0-15" fertilizer means that it contains 0% phosphorus).

Phosphorus is also present in grass clippings, leaves, car soap, and animal waste. Here are some simple steps you can take to improve water quality in your local streams and lakes.

1. **Use fertilizer sparingly**  
Have your soil tested through your local Extension Office.
2. **Clean up after your pet**  
Clean up animal waste, especially when by a lake or stream, or when droppings land on paved surfaces.
3. **Handle chemicals carefully**  
Never allow oil, paint, antifreeze, fertilizer or other chemicals to enter a storm sewer.
4. **Keep streets and gutters clean**  
Don't sweep grass clippings or leaves into the street or storm drains.
5. **Wash your vehicle on grass**  
It will help water your lawn and prevent runoff into storm drains.
6. **Support your local watershed efforts**  
Small efforts by individuals can add up to make a substantial difference. Contact the Crow River Organization of Water (C.R.O.W.) to find out what else you can do. 763-682-1933 Ext. 3.

