

## NANTUCKET'S INTERCONNECTED ENVIRONMENT

Nantucket's soil is composed of deep sand and gravel, allowing for water to readily infiltrate. This leads to the leaching of fertilizer, which refers to the loss of nutrients into water systems. When nutrients enter bodies of water they can lead to algal blooms that can eventually kill all aquatic life.

Algal blooms in Nantucket's harbors have led to the decline of eelgrass, which serves as the home to oysters and scallops. Eelgrass populations have decreased by about 34% since 1995 according to the Nantucket Natural Resources Department. Nantucket's bay scallop and oyster populations are threatened to decline even further if declining water quality due to nutrient loading continues.



For more information, please contact the Nantucket Health Department.

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Nantucket-ma.gov  
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# Is your fertilizer being properly applied?

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# How nitrogen use affects all of us

# What you can do to help


## What is a Best Management Practice? (BMP)

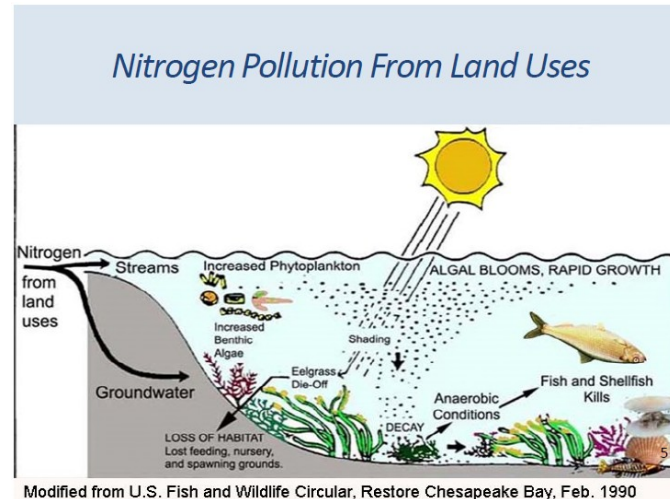
The BMP provides information and promotes protection of the ecosystem when applying fertilizer. BMP includes site planning guidelines based on science, as well as what components should make up your fertilizer.

## Why Follow It?

Practices listed in the BMP document decrease fertilizer run off by avoiding the improper application of fertilizers as well as the over application of fertilizers.

## Reading Your Bag

	<p>P &amp; K needed only as soil test indicates</p>
	<p>Nitrogen: key nutrient in plant growth. 21% N in a 50 lb. bag = 10.5 lbs. N</p>
	<p>Phosphorus: important for establishment. 3% P in a 50 lb. bag = 1.5 lbs. P</p>
	<p>Potassium: will increase stress tolerance. 20% K in a 50 lb. bag = 10 lbs. K</p>



Modified from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Circular, Restore Chesapeake Bay, Feb. 1990

- Water is the main carrier of nutrient pollution
- Nitrogen and phosphorus from fertilizers enter water systems via surface runoff when fertilizer is either over-applied or misapplied
- Nutrients promote excess plant growth, and in the worst case leads to algal blooms and nuisance seaweed growth
- Algal blooms blocks sunlight from entering the water and depletes the bottom waters of oxygen causing death to aquatic life
- The Harbor bottom collects nutrient pollution from our land use and drives further growth of algae and nuisance plants
- Nutrient pollution does not go away, it accumulates. Therefore it is imperative that we limit further inputs of nutrients to our water bodies



## What to look for when hiring a landscaper

- Make sure your landscaper has an up-to-date commercial application license [see below for example]
  - check our website for licensed landscapers
- Plant a native vegetative buffer between your property and any water body
- Inquire about the type of fertilizer being used and if it is compliant with best management practice
- Ask your landscaper to see a soil test for your property
- Ask to see the Fertilizer plan before any application begins
- Even organic compost has high levels of nitrogen, and phosphorus, please have it tested before use to make sure it meets BMP guidelines
- Opt for native vegetation

**Town of Nantucket**  
**Commercial Fertilizer Applicators License**

Landscape Professional  
Company Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Expiration Date: \_\_\_\_\_





Landscape Professional