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## Lawn products seeping into lakes

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DETROIT (AP) -- The same chemicals that keep lawns looking lush are responsible for many of the weeds that clog area lakes, impairing boating and swimming, environmental experts say.

Now, a several agencies are trying to show landowners ways to keep those fertilizers out of the water and still keep a green lawn.

When fertilizers containing phosphorus and other chemicals are applied to lawns, the excess can't be absorbed by plant roots. It then flows into culverts or storm drains and on to the water system. Those chemicals can cause algae blooms and other plant growths that inconvenience boaters and swimmers and can kill fish.

"Every small stream or ditch leads to a waterway, and everybody's in some lake's watershed," said Amy Mangus, an environmental planner with the Southeast Michigan Council of Governments, in a Detroit Free Press story on Tuesday. "That's why we say every home is a waterfront property."

The problem has become evident in West Bloomfield, where Green Lake has gone from healthy to critical condition in less than two years. A sudden spike in nutrient levels and huge algae blooms are to blame, according to scientists.

The West Bloomfield Township Board was expected to vote Monday on a proposed ordinance to ban the use of phosphorus on lawns and reduce the amount of nitrogens that can be used. Those who want to boost the use of nutrients would be required to have their soil tested by a Michigan State University

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laboratory to demonstrate need, said township trustee Stuart Brickner.

"Most soils in southeast Michigan have 10 times the phosphorus that is needed," Brickner said. "Some in West Bloomfield tested at 80 times what is necessary."

In hopes of preventing such problems, some metropolitan Detroit agencies are offering public awareness programs about environmentally friendly lawn care options.

The Southeastern Oakland County Resource Recovery Authority has a web site and is distributing other materials to encourage the use of low-phosphorus fertilizers. The site is [www.healthylandscapes.com](http://www.healthylandscapes.com).

SEMCOG is sending suggestions to local governments on how they can create their own fertilizer ordinances.

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