IMPORTANT INFORMATION FROM OUR TOWN ENGINEER:

The following information is taken from a NYCDEP brochure on phosphorus fertilizer entitled *"There are few more important things than our family or our water…"*

"Preserving our natural resources starts in your yard"

One of the most important ways to ensure good water quality is to limit the amount of phosphorus applied to our landscapes. The reason is simple. When too many products containing phosphorus are used, the nutrient can go directly to our streams, causing serious pollution problems and health concerns. Thankfully, there is an easy solution.

Homeowners should test their soil before using fertilizers.

A simple test can quickly and accurately measure the levels of nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, and pH present in your soil. If the test indicates that phosphorus is not needed, a fertilizer with zero phosphorus should be applied. If phosphorus is present in sufficient quantities, more phosphorus will not benefit your landscape, and it may go directly to our lakes and streams. Soil testing prior to applying fertilizers will help to protect our water and environment.

How does phosphorus cause pollution and health problems?

Too much phosphorus in streams, lakes and reservoir water stimulates the growth of unwanted vegetation such as algae (i.e. algae blooms) during warm weather. You have probably seen lakes and reservoirs that look like they are covered by a blanket of green slime – that's unwanted algae growth that may be caused in part by phosphorus coming from your over-fertilized property.

Algae blooms adversely impact drinking water quality by:

1. causing offensive taste, odors, and color
2. interfering with the disinfection process, which protects us from disease-carrying micro-organisms
3. contributing to the formation of hazardous disinfection by-products, and
4. hurting fish and wildlife.

This resource is worth saving.

That's why a committee of dedicated scientists, government officials, and industry leaders has developed methods for protecting New York's water resources.

Help to protect our water by following sound landscape practices. ***You can make a difference.***

If you use the services of a landscaper, just ask for a soil test before fertilizer is applied. If you do your own yard work, it is easy to take a soil sample yourself. Instructions on how to sample your soil can be obtained from Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE). The telephone number and address for the Dutchess County CCE offices are presented below.

Once collected, the soil sample should be mailed to the Nutrient Analysis Lab at Cornell University or to a private soil testing laboratory for a modest fee. Contact information for private labs and additional information concerning soil testing can be obtained from your local CCE office. Remember, the water of New York is one of the most valuable resources we have. Let's all work together to preserve it!

You may obtain soil testing information from:

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Dutchess County
CCEDC Main Office - Farm and Home Center
2715 Route 44, Suite 1
Millbrook, NY 12545
Phone: 845-677-8223
Fax: 845-677-6563
www.cce.cornell.edu/dutchess