

Nitrogen affects our drinking water, too!

Recent sampling results from Charlestown's drinking water wells have shown that nitrate (a form of nitrogen) tends to be elevated in areas of high-density residential property, such as the neighborhoods near the salt ponds.

Nitrate levels above 10 milligrams per liter (mg/L) are particularly dangerous for infants, who can be at risk for "blue baby" syndrome.

Several private wells in Charlestown occasionally have nitrate levels above 10 mg/L, and many more have results in the 5-10 mg/L range.

When we work to protect our salt ponds from the effects of nitrogen, we're also protecting our drinking water supplies... and vice versa. It's a win-win situation.



For more information on private wells, please visit UConn's Interactive Website <http://www.healthyhome.uconn.edu/>

Keep it up

In addition to being conscientious about our lawn care practices, we can help decrease nitrogen levels in our salt ponds and drinking wells by:

- ◆ Replacing cesspools and failed septic systems, and making sure that all septic systems are properly maintained.
- ◆ Always picking up dog poop and putting it in the trash.
- ◆ Not feeding waterfowl.
- ◆ Building rain gardens to decrease stormwater runoff.
- ◆ On shoreline property, creating a vegetated buffer to discourage geese and to prevent the lawn from being fertilized right up to the water.

For More Information

Visit the following websites:

www.CharlestownRI.org

www.RIStormwaterSolutions.org

Or Call:

The Town of Charlestown Office of Wastewater Management at (401) 364-5030



Know where it goes.....

Beautiful Lawns, Healthy Salt Ponds



Town of Charlestown
Stormwater Management
Program



TOWN OF CHARLESTOWN

(401) 364-5030

The salt ponds - a resource for all of us

Charlestown's three salt ponds provide beautiful views, habitats for fish and shellfish, and a place to relax. These unique environments help to keep property values high and draw tourists to our town.

However, when water entering the ponds carries excess nitrogen from fertilizers, septic systems, and animal waste, it has a greater effect than we might expect.



Fort Neck Cove—Ninigret Pond

This excess nitrogen "fertilizes" algae, setting off a series of steps which lead to:

- ◆ Murky waters and mucky bottoms
- ◆ Decreased shellfish populations
- ◆ That "rotten egg" smell
- ◆ Clogged boat propellers
- ◆ Less appealing beaches

When we understand where excess nitrogen comes from, we can start to reduce it.

You can make a difference.....

Keep your lawn looking great...naturally!

A few small changes in your lawn care practices can mean a healthier lawn or garden and less pollutants for our waters.

Reducing or eliminating fertilizer can go a long way towards restoring the salt ponds.

- ◆ Mow at the highest setting on your lawn mower; longer grass helps to conserve water and control weeds.
- ◆ Leave grass clippings on the lawn to improve its health and quality; you'll also require less fertilizer.
- ◆ Consider letting your lawn go dormant if there's a drought. It will come back in the fall.

Sweep spills back onto the lawn

Anything that's lying on pavement is more easily washed by stormwater into drainage features or down storm drains into our salt ponds.

If any chemical or yard debris get on the sidewalk or driveway, sweep them back onto the lawn.

Don't hose the driveway to get it clean.



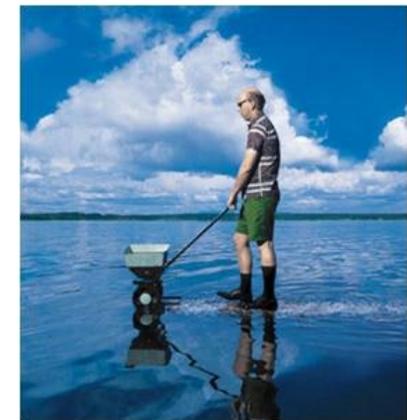
If you MUST fertilize...

Fertilize sparingly. Fertilize only once a year, doing so in September is best. There are cooler temperatures, ample rain, and weeds are dying back.

If you must apply fertilizer in the spring, do so after the grass is actively growing. A good rule of thumb is to wait until you've mowed the lawn three times.



Consider using organic fertilizers such as bone



meal, blood meal, compost, or organic blends. No matter what product you use, though, be sure to follow the manufacturer's directions for application rate and timing.

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Use slow-release fertilizers. The label should read: slow release or time release fertilizer with water-insoluble, slowly-available, or slowly-available soluble nitrogen.