

GREEN FEED

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The Town of Glastonbury



INTRODUCTION



Park Maintainers Chris Shanahan and Dan Poirier spread phosphorus-free fertilizer after preparing soil to receive sod in high-traffic area of soccer field

The Town park system includes 28 baseball and softball fields and almost as many soccer/football/lacrosse/field hockey fields. With several thousand users playing sports each week, the natural grass has to withstand a lot of pressure. One of the inputs that helps maintain safe, dense vigorously growing athletic turf is fertilizer.

PHOSPHORUS-FREE FERTILIZER PROTECTS SURFACE WATERS

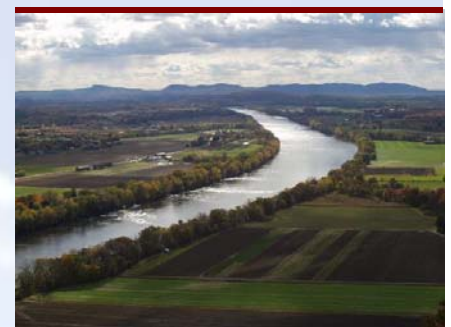
Fertilizer contains three primary components:

- ☞ nitrogen (N),
- ☞ phosphorus (P_2O_5) and
- ☞ potassium (K_2O).

In recent years, there has been increased concern statewide about the contamination of surface waters by the movement of nitrogen and phosphorus from urban landscapes. Phosphorus is an essential nutrient for plant growth, and it is routinely used as part of lawn fertilization programs. Often times, phosphorus is applied unnecessarily as part of lawn fertilization – even when sufficient phosphorus already exists in the soil. *Not so in Glastonbury's parks.* Soil testing is done to determine whether phosphorus is needed for plant growth. When it is not needed, phosphorus-free fertilizer is applied.

The same approach can and should be taken by homeowners who routinely fertilize their lawns. Preventing the migration of phosphorus into surface waters, lakes and streams can help prevent algae blooms, which can adversely affect fish and wildlife habitat. The algae blooms can lead to the eutrophication of ponds and lakes – turning water green, cloudy, causing odor problems and depleting oxygen for fish and other species.

Homeowners can use any one of several labs for soil testing. The UCONN Department of Plant Science has a soil nutrient analysis



laboratory. For more information, use the following link:

www.soiltest.uconn.edu/sampling.php

Select the Home Grounds/Landscape “PDF” link for questionnaires and instructions.

The CT Agricultural Experiment Station also has labs in Windsor and New Haven. Visit:

www.ct.gov/caes

Select “Programs and Services,” then “Soil Testing” for more information.

Both labs are reasonably priced and are easy to use.

Soil testing makes good sense for a variety of reasons. Managing phosphorous is just one of them, but a critical one. It is one simple, easy step that we can all take to be good stewards of the environment.

GLASTONBURY’S GREEN INITIATIVES PROGRAM

Glastonbury’s Green Initiatives program operates under the direction of the Town Manager. The committee is chaired by the Purchasing Agent and the Superintendent of Sanitation. Committee members from across Town departments participate and contribute ideas and suggestions committed to a “greener” community.

The committee assembles information about products and services and makes the information available to specific departments that can evaluate them and develop applications in Town projects with the approval of the Town Manager.

These “Go-Green” bulletins contain information about the results of product evaluations and other accomplishments of Town departments. We hope this information can provide you insight to the Town’s green initiatives and also lead others in the community to find ways to use environmentally preferable products. Please contact us if we can help you with further information or if you have additional suggestions. ■

