CONSIDER THESE TIPS FOR A HEALTHY YARD, HEALTHY RIVER AND A HEALTHY WALLET. . .

THE RIGHT SEED

- Starting off with the right mix of seed will ensure the most success in establishing and maintaining your lawn, while minimizing time and effort. The best lawn seed for Northwest Ohio will contain turf-type Tall Fescues and Perennial Rye grasses. These grass mixes are drought resistant and are well suited to our soil types. Although it is popular, Kentucky Bluegrass requires lots of water and sun, which means more time and more money for you.
- Make your lawn only as big as you need it. A smaller lawn requires less time to mow and less money to maintain. Plant native trees, shrubs, grasses, and flowers to landscape the rest of your yard. Contact the Toledo Botanical Garden for more information on native landscaping.

MOW HIGH

- Make your lawn care cheaper and your lawn easier to maintain by mowing high - three inches is the rule! This promotes healthier roots and a healthier lawn. A common mistake many homeowners make is cutting the grass too short. Use a mowing marker or a ruler to help you keep your grass at least three inches high.
- Tall grass can capture more sun, so it is better able to make its own food and does not need as much fertilizer, saving you money. If you leave your grass clippings on your lawn, you may not need to fertilize at all.
- Taller grass tolerates hot and dry conditions better. It develops deeper roots, enabling it to reach deep into the soil for water. It also shades the soil and reduces evaporation. Taller grass will often shade out unwanted weeds and prevent their seeds from germinating.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON LAWN CARE:

Lucas Soil and Water Conservation District	419-893-1966
Wood Soil and Water Conservation District	419-354-5517
OSU Extension – Lucas County Office	419-578-6783
OSU Extension – Wood County Office	419-354-9050
Toledo Botanical Garden	419-936-2986

Add up all the land that drains into the same waterway, and you have a watershed. Understanding how we impact our watershed is the first step toward protecting water quality.

HOW DO POLLUTANTS GET INTO THE RIVER SYSTEM? UNFORTUNATELY, IT IS TOO EASY!

Water from rainfall, snowmelt, and sprinklers moves over land to the nearest storm drain, ditch or creek. Pollutants "hitch a ride" on this water that is running off. From there, the polluted water enters area waterways like Swan Creek, Ottawa River, and the Maumee River, unfiltered and untreated. This runoff can cause a decline in water quality, harming the creatures living in and around the waterway. Contamination of surface and ground water also places our drinking water supplies at risk.

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

TAKE ACTION! YOU CAN PROTECT WATER QUALITY. IT'S EASY. . .

- Pick a few of the simple steps recommended in this brochure. Try them for a few months. Remember, a few simple changes can make a big difference.
- Share this tip card with a friend or neighbor.
- Get involved in local environmental activities as a member or a volunteer. The Maumee RAP has been working to improve and protect our area waterways for over 15 years. To learn how you can support their efforts or get involved, visit www.maumeerap.org.

Give Water a Hand is a cooperative education effort among the following:
Maumee RAP (419-241-9155), Toledo Metropolitan Area Council of Governments (419-241-9155)

Lucas County (419-213-4500)
City of Oregon (419-698-7047)
Village of Holland (419-865-7104)
VIllage of Ottawa Hills (419-536-1111)
Village of Whitehouse (419-877-5383)
Township of Monclova (419-865-7862)
Township of Springfield (419-865-0239)
Township of Washington (419-726-6621)
Ohio Environmental Education Fund
Ohio Department of Natural Resources

City of Northwood (419-693-9327)
Village of Haskins (419-823-1911)
Village of Millbury (419-836-9671)
Village of Waterville (419-878-8100)
Township of Jerusalem (419-836-8921)
Township of Spencer (419-865-2883)
Township of Sylvania (419-882-0031)
Township of Waterville (419-878-5176)
Ohio Environmental Protection Agency
United States Fish & Wildlife Service

Keep for future reference or recycle.

TIP CARD NO. 2

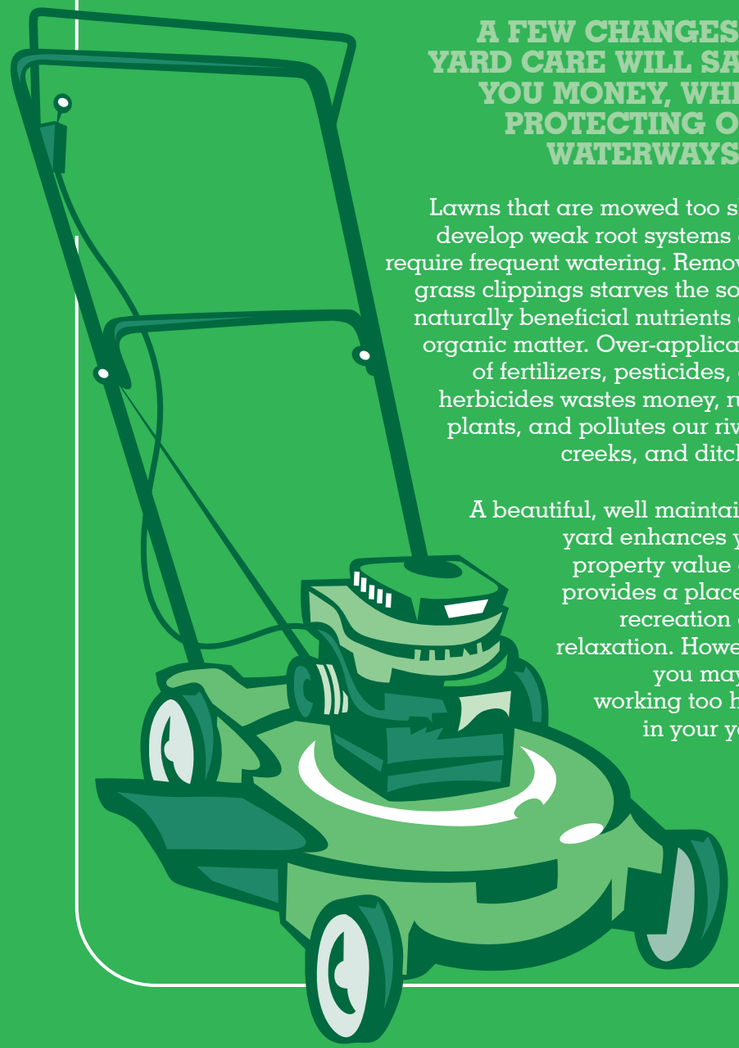
WHY is your neighbor's GRASS GREENER?

maybe they already know. . .

give WATER A HAND

Find out how you can save time and money, while making your lawn healthier and protecting our local waterways.

ARE YOU "SPOILING" YOUR LAWN AND GARDEN WITH TOO MUCH CARE?



A FEW CHANGES IN YARD CARE WILL SAVE YOU MONEY, WHILE PROTECTING OUR WATERWAYS. . .

Lawns that are mowed too short develop weak root systems and require frequent watering. Removing grass clippings starves the soil of naturally beneficial nutrients and organic matter. Over-application of fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides wastes money, ruins plants, and pollutes our rivers, creeks, and ditches!

A beautiful, well maintained yard enhances your property value and provides a place for recreation and relaxation. However, you may be working too hard in your yard.

SMART WATERING

- Don't water on a set schedule! Water only when the grass or plants show signs of needing it. Over-watering can damage plants, stimulate fungus, and leach nutrients out of the soil. If you do choose to water, 1 inch per week is usually enough. To test whether or not your lawn needs watering, step on the grass. If it springs back up, you don't need to water. If it stays flat, it is time to water again – a deep watering in the morning!
- In the hot, dry summer, grass grows slowly and the blades turn brown. But the plants don't die. If you can bear this stage, your grass will green up soon after it rains.
- Try not watering a test patch of grass for a year and see how you like it. If your test patch is successful, try a larger section next year. Your grass may turn brown (remember the roots are still healthy), but you will not have to spend every weekend setting up the sprinkler and moving it around the yard.
- Put rainwater to work for you by directing downspouts into garden areas or installing a rain barrel to collect water for use during dry weather. You can also border your lawn with deep-rooted native flowers and shrubs to prevent water runoff, which means less work for you! For more information contact your local Soil and Water Conservation District, OSU Extension Office or the Toledo Botanical Garden.

FERTILIZER USE

- Grass clippings and mulched leaves are the ideal food source for your lawn, naturally providing essential nutrients slowly over time. The clippings supply nitrogen that your lawn needs to stay healthy.*
- Grass clippings do not cause thatch. Thatch is made up of both dead and living root, stem, and leaf parts which are resistant to decay. Kentucky Bluegrass and Creeping Bentgrass produce the most thatch. Turf-type Tall Fescues and Perennial Rye grasses do not produce thatch. Excessive fertilization and watering may encourage thatch. So leave your clippings on the lawn and you may not have to spend anything on fertilizer!
- Fertilizing right before it rains may seem like a good idea, but in fact the fertilizer will not have time to soak into the soil and will wash off into the local rivers, creeks or ditches, often through storm drains. It will also wash off if you fertilize too often or too much at once, wasting your money.
- Use slow release fertilizers on sandy soils, to ensure that concentrated amounts of nutrients are not available for leaching out of the soil. Use fast release fertilizers on heavy, clay or compacted soils – the longer a fertilizer granule remains undissolved in these conditions, the greater the chance of being washed into waterways.
- If you have higher expectations for your lawn, find out what it needs by having the soil tested. Your local Soil and Water Conservation District or OSU Extension Office can help.

ENJOY YOURSELF

- Don't let lawn care become the national pastime. Once you plant the right grass, and fertilize wisely; you are ready for the best part of lawn care – forgetting about it. If you follow the tips above, you will have a healthy lawn with minimal effort. You will also have more time and money to do the things you enjoy.

*Grasses need sufficient nitrogen to promote top growth, phosphorus for root development and potassium for strong stems and disease resistance. Fertilizers have three numbers such as 10-10-10 or 34-3-4. These numbers indicate the percentage of nitrogen (the first number), phosphorus (the middle number), and potassium (the last number) in the fertilizer.

Some facts and information from the American Water Works Association and the Huron River Watershed Council.