

Phosphorus-Free Lawn Fertilizer Exceptions



COLORADO – Use phosphorus when you need it

The Colorado Phosphorus Free Lawn Fertilizer Initiative and Coalition are all voluntary. This effort is to focus on outreach and public education around the topic of preventing unnecessary phosphorus that we use in our daily lives from getting to downstream waters. This effort is focused on inorganic, all-purpose lawn fertilizers sold by the bag in retail stores. Below is a list of exceptions.



Green Lawns, Blue Waters - Protecting Colorado's Water One Yard at a Time.

Agriculture: This phosphorus free lawn fertilizer initiative does not apply to any agricultural practices including turf or sod farms. Phosphorus is needed to replenish the crop soils after harvesting.

Golf Courses: Private and public golf courses have highly trained groundskeepers and turf managers that typically follow a management plan. Best management practices at golf courses focus on following the 4R principles to maintain the best turf surfaces and to avoid wasteful practices.

Sports Fields: Similar to golf courses, sports fields that have natural turf are managed differently than residential lawns. Intense activities on turf require a different type of upkeep and fertilizer practices. Phosphorus is used to help with stressed turf and to help avoid sparse or bare patches.

New Lawns from Seed: If you are growing a new lawn from seed or repairing bare spots, it is recommended to apply no more than 1.0 lbs. of phosphorus per 1,000 square feet of lawn per year.

Low Phosphorus Soils: From a soils test, if you find out that your soils are low in phosphorus, then it is a good idea to apply lawn fertilizers that contain phosphorus. Apply no more than 1.0 lbs. of phosphorus per 1,000 square feet of lawn per year.

Organic Soil Amendments: Manures, biosolids, compost, and other organic based soil amendment products do not need to be phosphorus free. These types of organic products naturally tend to be low in phosphorus. The initiative is focused only on processed, human-made inorganic fertilizers.

Bulk: There are 12 other states across the country that have statewide lawn fertilizers laws in place and all of them focus on bagged lawn fertilizers that are sold at local retail stores. In Colorado, there is no lawn fertilizer law, and this education campaign is focused on lawn owners that purchase bagged fertilizers from their local retail store.

Voluntary: This statewide coalition and campaign is completely voluntary. This is a bottom-up approach to helping educate the public about water quality and watersheds. We all live downstream of each other, and we all need to realize what daily actions and decisions do to our world. Just as phosphorus was removed from our detergents in the 1970's to help with water quality, phosphorus needs to be removed from our lawn fertilizers.

Overall: Anyone that manages a crop, lawn, sports field, golf course, garden, or any other crop that needs nutrients to grow should follow the well-known 4R Principles of Nutrient Stewardship & Management: **Right Product, Right Rate, Right Time, and Right Place.**

Colorado Phosphorus-Free Lawn Fertilizer Coalition

Phosphorus-Free Lawn Fertilizer Initiative Supported by:

