

Why Phosphorus-Free in the Nippersink Creek Watershed?

The Nippersink Watershed Association and Illinois State University (with funding from the Illinois EPA), have partnered to develop the "Lawns for the Nippersink" campaign geared at educating local watershed residents and retailers about the value of using phosphorus-free fertilizers for lawn care. The Nippersink Creek Watershed spans over 200 square miles and is a valuable resource to McHenry County residents. The watershed is home to high quality water and habitat resources for not only local wildlife but also is a recreational asset for residents throughout northern Illinois and Wisconsin. However, due to increasing development and land use change, the water resources within the Nippersink Creek Watershed are increasing at risk from nonpoint source pollution (NPS). One significant source of NPS pollution in urban and suburban areas is fertilizer and pesticide runoff from turf grass lawns, which has been associated with a variety of water quality concerns such as algal blooms, eutrophication, and contaminated groundwater. Phosphorus (P) is a nutrient found in many fertilizers that feeds algal blooms in waterways. By using Phosphorus-free fertilizer, you can maintain a natural, healthy lawn without compromising the quality of local waters.

In response to this increasing risk, we have created the "**Lawns for the Nippersink**" campaign, which focuses on educating local homeowners about phosphorus-free fertilizers and working with local garden and lawn care retailers who currently supply phosphorus-free fertilizers to better promote these products in their stores. The "**Lawns for the Nippersink**" logo will be incorporated into a variety of outreach materials to help people recognize this campaign and quickly identify phosphorus-free products. As part of this outreach campaign, this spring and summer, local garden retailers will be given educational materials to use in their stores to help educate consumers about phosphorus-free fertilizers and how to identify phosphorus-free fertilizers versus conventional fertilizers. The "**Lawns for the Nippersink**" campaign has also developed door hang tags containing information on how homeowners can care for their lawn using environmentally friendly practices. One of the goals of the campaign is to distribute approximately 3,000 of these door hang tags to homeowners during the month of May, 2013.



Local Retailers that Carry Phosphorus-Free Fertilizer (Look for the "Lawns for the Nippersink" Logo):

- Harvard True Value, 42 N. Ayer, Harvard, IL
- Tractor Supply Company, 1201 S. Division, Harvard, IL
- Novotny True Value Hardware, 5615 Wilmot Road, Johnsburg, IL
- Perricone Garden Center and Nursery, 31600 Fisher Road, McHenry, IL
- Bjorkman's Ace Hardware, 4520 W. Crystal Lake Road, McHenry, IL
- Richmond Ace Hardware, 10824 N. Main Street, Richmond, IL
- Bohn's Ace Hardware, 150 S. Eastwood Drive, Woodstock, IL
- Woodstock Farm and Lawn Center, 2020 S. Eastwood Drive, Woodstock, IL
- Farm and Fleet, 11501 Route 14, Woodstock, IL