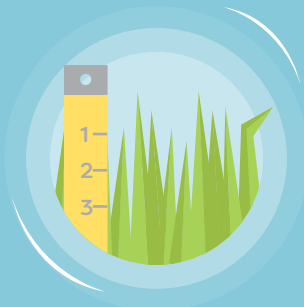


## More Tips for a Healthy Lawn and a Healthy Niantic River

- ✓ Mow at least three inches high to encourage deeper and healthier roots.
- ✓ Choose grasses such as fescues that require less water and fertilizer.
- ✓ Avoid overwatering and do not fertilize if a heavy rain is in the forecast.
- ✓ Avoid using combination products that include both fertilizer and weed control, which can lead to overuse of fertilizer. Apply weed control products separately at the recommended time.



**DON'T GUESS – SOIL TEST!** Get your soil tested to see if additional nutrients or limestone are needed. Plus, Connecticut state law requires a soil test if phosphorus will be applied to lawns. The UConn Extension soil test includes guidance for nitrogen applications, but also suggests recommendations to see if amount of nitrogen can be reduced.

This brochure is part of a campaign to promote healthy lawns and clean coastal waters in the Niantic River and Long Island Sound. Content was developed by the Niantic River Watershed Committee with support from New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission and sponsored by the Long Island Sound Study.

**More information:** Ask neighbors with an “Ask Us How” sticker on their curbside bins about their lawn care.

**Or Contact:** Judy Rondeau, Niantic River Watershed Committee, at [judy.rondeau@comcast.net](mailto:judy.rondeau@comcast.net)

Website: [www.healthylawnshealthyriver.net](http://www.healthylawnshealthyriver.net)

Social media: [#healthylawnshealthyriver](https://twitter.com/healthylawnshealthyriver)



# HEALTHY LAWNS, HEALTHY RIVER

A lawn care guide for a healthy yard and healthy Niantic River

Ask Us How



A recent survey reveals that nearly 75% of homeowners in the area are willing to reduce the amount of fertilizers they use for a healthy Niantic River.\*

Here are some practices, recommended for New England to help you achieve that goal.

*\*Niantic River Attitude and Awareness Study, TNC, 2017*



### Leave grass clippings on the lawn.

Clippings decompose rapidly, providing natural, slow-release nitrogen for a lush, healthy lawn! Mulching mowers cut the clippings into very small pieces so they disappear into the lawn and decompose quickly. Mulching mowers work best when the grass is no more than an inch or two longer than the target height. For best mowing and mulching results, mow when the grass is dry.

If you use fertilizer, leaving grass clippings on the lawn may allow you to reduce the amount of fertilizer you apply each year. See how to reduce your fertilizer use in the next step.



### Apply no fertilizer, or reduce the amount you use by 1/2 to 2/3.

If you don't use fertilizer and you are happy with the way your lawn looks, then there is no need to start fertilizing. If you use fertilizer, University of Connecticut turf scientists recommend applying one-third to one-half the amount recommended on the fertilizer bag label. After two weeks, if you like the way your lawn looks then you have the right amount; if it's not quite acceptable, then apply a little more.

Some yards naturally have enough nutrients, including nitrogen, for healthy lawns and plants. Too much nitrogen makes grasses more susceptible to disease and less tolerant to drought. Excess nitrogen can also wash into Niantic River and Bay, triggering algae blooms that use up oxygen in the water.



### Apply fertilizer at the right time – close to Labor Day and/or Memorial Day.

Applying fertilizer when the grass can't efficiently absorb the nutrients (before April, hot summer months, or after Oct. 15), is a waste of time and money. Unused fertilizer could leak into groundwater and wash into the Niantic River. In our region, if you fertilize once a year, do it around Labor Day in the fall or Memorial Day in the spring. If your lawn needs fertilizer twice a year, those dates also are the best times.

Following at least one of these practices can help make a difference in the health of the Niantic River!

Want more Info? Read the full recommendations developed by turf scientists at six New England Land Grant Universities including University of Connecticut

[www.healthylawnshealthyriver.net](http://www.healthylawnshealthyriver.net)