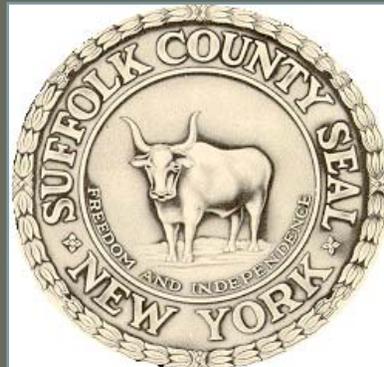


# Self Guided Presentation

## **The Law**

For Retail/Wholesale Businesses  
Selling Lawn Fertilizer

Distributed by Suffolk County



# Nitrogen Fertilizer Reduction Initiative

This is a self teaching guide to:

- Definition of Terms
- Understanding the Fertilizer Law
- Requirements for Selling Fertilizers
- Website Information



# Definition of Terms

- **Nitrogen Pollution** – When excess nitrogen enters ground and/or surface waters potentially causing serious environmental and health effects.
- **Runoff** - The part of precipitation water or excess irrigation that runs off the land into streams or other surface water. Water from streets or domestic properties that carry pollutants into receiving waters such as lakes, bays, or streams, and into sewer systems.
- **Leaching** – The movement of water carrying materials down through the soil, past the root zone.

# Fertilizer Law Effective Jan 1, 2009

**Suffolk County law states:**

**No fertilizer applications on lawns  
~ between Nov 1<sup>st</sup> and April 1<sup>st</sup> ~**

To view the law go to:

<http://legis.suffolkcountyny.gov/resos2007/i2117-07.htm>

For more information about the Nitrogen Fertilizer Reduction Initiative  
go to:

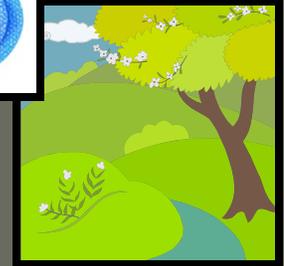
<http://www.suffolkcountyny.gov/Departments/EconomicDevelopmentandPlanning/WaterQualityImprovement/FertilizerReductionInitiative.aspx>

Please direct any questions about the program to Suffolk County:  
Jennifer McGivern at 631-853-4412

# Fertilizer Law

## Why the Law?

- ❑ To prevent and reduce nitrogen runoff, leaching, and groundwater pollution.
- ❑ Studies done over many years show that the interval between **November 1** and **April 1** has the greatest potential for runoff and nitrate leaching, since temperatures are generally too cold for the nitrogen to be absorbed by the grass plants (soil temp below 50°F). Most precipitation during this time period either runs off the soil surface or it enters the groundwater potentially transporting the unused nitrogen.



# Fertilizer Law



## What happens if nitrogen doesn't get used?

### Pollution to Groundwater

- ❑ Nitrogen pollution occurs from fertilization when water containing nitrogen moves through the ground below root levels and into the groundwater.
- ❑ This poses a major problem, because the nitrates can leach all the way to Long Island's natural aquifer, the source of our drinking water.

### Pollution to Surface Waters

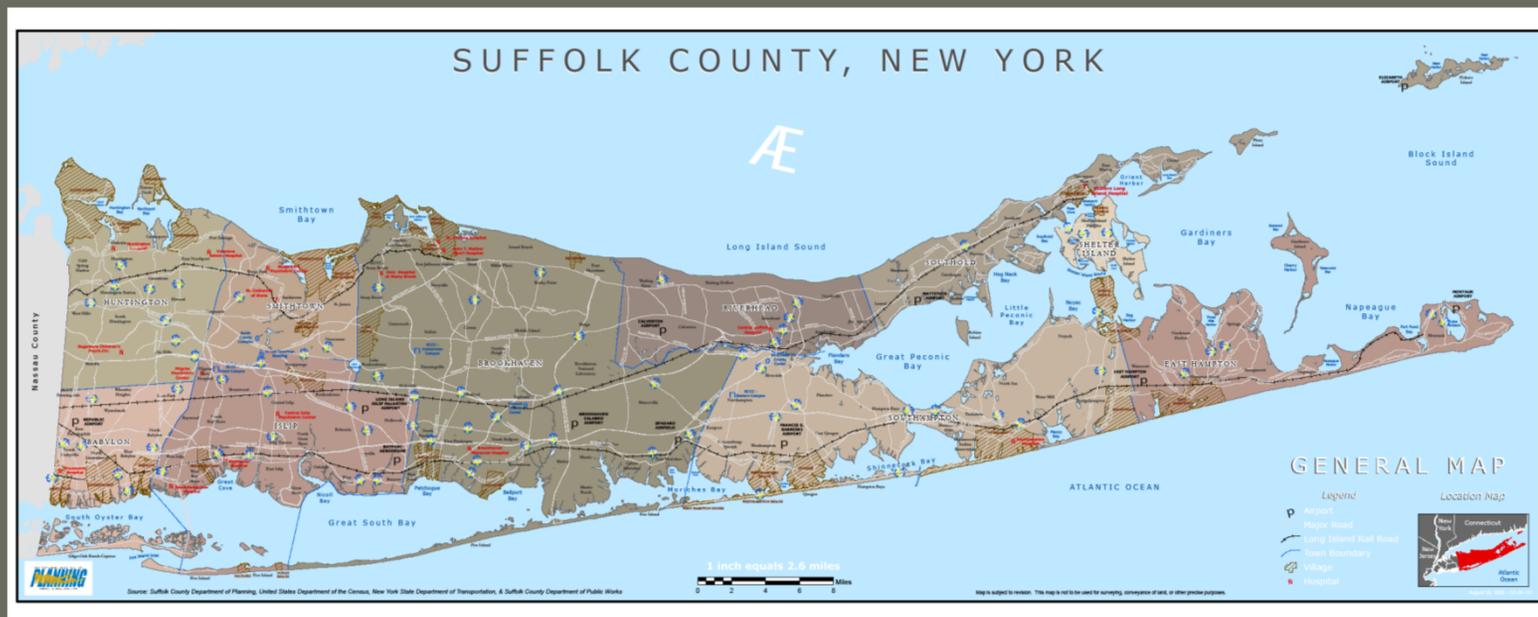
- ❑ Nitrogen pollution can affect other natural waterways because it encourages the growth of algae. This disturbs plants, wildlife, and even impacts our own activities (fishing, swimming, boating) in our bays, rivers, lakes, and streams, because the extra nitrogen changes the environment in the water.



# Fertilizer Law

## Who is affected by this law?

- All Suffolk County residents
- Landscape businesses
- Golf courses
- County properties (with noted exemptions)
- Retail/Wholesale businesses selling lawn fertilizers



# Fertilizer Law

## What is the fine?

- ❑ Any violations of this law shall be subject to a civil penalty, in an amount not to exceed **\$1000 per violation**.
- ❑ Each day of continued violation shall constitute a separate additional violation.

## Who is enforcing the law?

- ❑ *The Suffolk County Department of Health Services.*  
Pollution Control - Call: 631.854.2536

# **A New Requirement for Landscape business professionals**

**Landscapers are also prohibited from applying fertilizer between Nov 1 and April 1.**

- This law now requires landscape business owners to attend a one time educational fertilizer program.
- This program is designed to inform landscapers about the law and the potential environmental impact of nitrogen pollution and to encourage the use of the practical guidelines of Best Management Practices (BMPs) in landscaping.
- Upon completion of the educational program, attendees receive a certificate directly from Suffolk County which is a requirement of a home improvement contractors license application or renewal.

# Requirements for Selling Fertilizers Signs and Brochures

## The law states the following:

- ❑ The Suffolk County Department of Economic Development and Planning, Division of Water Quality Improvement, will be furnishing informational signs and brochures to all establishments that sell lawn fertilizers. The signs must be displayed within 10 feet of the fertilizer display area.
- ❑ If an establishment has more than one fertilizer display area, and it is not continuous, then additional signs and brochures must be displayed in both areas within 10 feet of each display area.

# Education and the law

**How can establishments selling lawn fertilizer help to educate the consumer?**

- Key information can be found on the signs and brochures that Suffolk County will be providing to retail and wholesale businesses.
- Information contained on this CD should be shared with retail/wholesale employees as well as consumers.

# Want to know more?

- Visit Suffolk County's websites:

<http://healthylawns.suffolkcountyny.gov>

<http://www.suffolkcountyny.gov/Departments/EconomicDevelopmentandPlanning/WaterQualityImprovement/FertilizerReductionInitiative.aspx>

- Visit Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County's website:

<http://www.ccesuffolk.org> or call 631.727.7850

- Visit Cornell University's website:

<http://blogs.cornell.edu/horticulture/>