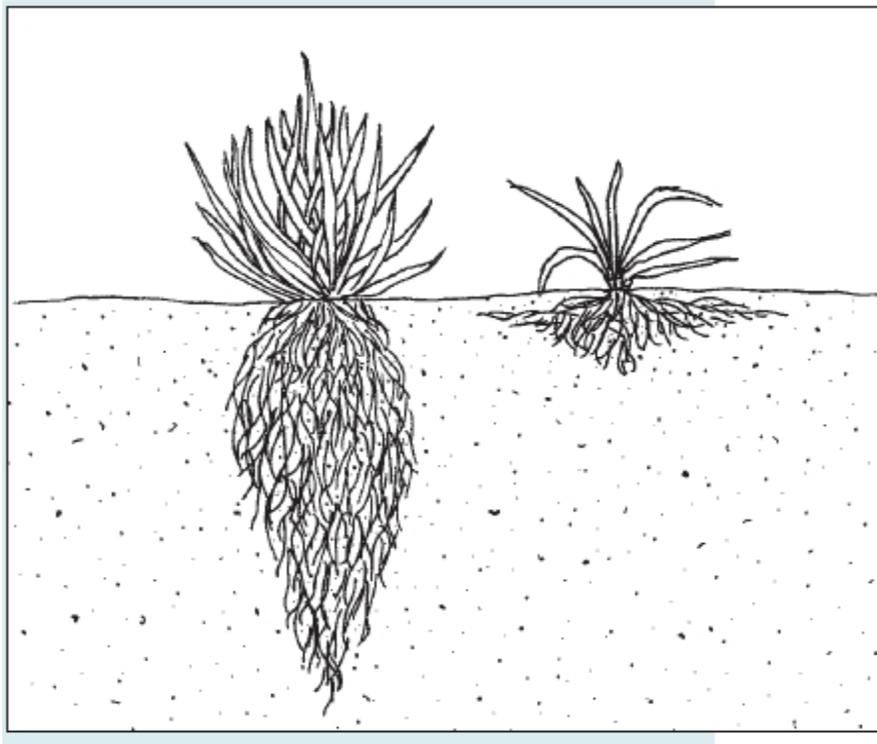


Lawn Care the Environmentally - Friendly Way



Know Your Soil Fertility

Leaving the grass clippings on the lawn after mowing is the best kind of fertilizer. Research has shown that recycling clippings in place reduces the need for supplemental fertilizer applications by 50 to 100 per cent!

If you must fertilize, avoid over-fertilization by having your soil tested and following soil test recommendations. Choose a fertilizer formulation that most closely matches what the soil lacks. Slow-release fertilizers improve the chances that nutrients will remain in the root zone until the grass can use them. For additional water quality protection, use organic fertilizers if possible. Organic formulas combine the benefits of slow nutrient release with the addition of organic matter to the soil. Organic fertilizers may also help reduce some turf disease problems.

Never apply more than one pound of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet at one time. To determine what is one pound of nitrogen, divide the first number on the fertilizer bag into 100. The result is the amount (in pounds) of fertilizer that should be applied to 1,000 square feet of lawn. Bluegrass lawns generally require three applications. Recommended application times coincide with three holidays: Memorial Day, Labor Day and Columbus Day.

To ensure best plant use of fertilizers and to reduce potential water quality problems, Illinois lawns should be fertilized between May and November. Always check the weather and avoid applying fertilizer before heavy rainstorms or during long, dry spells.

To learn more or report possible illegal discharges to the storm drain system, call the *City of Elgin* at (847) 697-3160.

(Source: Clean Water Fact Sheet, produced by NEMO and Sea Grant Connecticut)