

Barneгат Bay Action Update - Special Announcement
NEW JERSEY'S BLACK-OUT DATES FOR FERTILIZER USE ARE UPON US
NJ Department of Environmental Protection (DEP)
November, 2013

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Help spread the word - but NOT the fertilizer

As the weather turns colder, applying fertilizer makes little sense. The ground is hard and grass has stopped growing. It's also against the law.

Governor Chris Christie signed one of the nation's toughest fertilizer laws and it sets standards that are designed to protect New Jersey's waterways from nutrient pollution. One feature of the law is that it determines when fertilizer can and cannot be used. Referred to as "Black-out dates," fertilizer cannot be applied on the dates below:

- As of November 16, residents cannot apply fertilizers containing nitrogen or phosphorus to their lawns until next spring, beginning on February 28, 2014;
- Commercial fertilizer applicators must complete their customer service cycle of late fall nitrogen or phosphorus fertilization by December 2 and then fertilizer containing nitrogen or phosphorus cannot be applied onto lawns again until February 28, 2014; but
- All other materials, such as products containing potassium, lime and composts, are still legal to apply during these blackout dates of November/December through February 28th.

The reason for the black-out dates is a common-sense approach to water quality protection. When the ground is frozen, the possibility is greater for having runoff from fertilizer impair the State's surface and groundwater quality.

New Jersey's fertilizer law also established a new content standard for fertilizer that is reducing excess nutrient runoff by decreasing the total amount of nitrogen in fertilizer and increasing the amount of slow release nitrogen. As of January 5 of this year, all fertilizer products for turf now contain at least 20 percent slow-release nitrogen, and zero phosphorus unless a soil test demonstrates a need for more.

The law also created a fertilizer application certification program for professional fertilizer applicators, through the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station at Rutgers University and in consultation with the DEP. The certification program was launched by Rutgers University in late 2011. To learn more about ProFACT (Professional Fertilizer Applicator Certification and Training effort), go to: <http://profact.rutgers.edu/Pages/default.aspx>.

The DEP worked with members of the Healthy Lawns Healthy Waters Workgroup and the New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station at Rutgers University to implement the fertilizer law. To learn more about the law's components and status, visit: www.nj.gov/dep/healthylawnshealthywater.

Implementation of this law is also part of Governor Christie's 10-point action plan to protect and restore Barneгат Bay. To learn about how this law is being carried out in the Barneгат Bay watershed, visit: www.nj.gov/dep/barneгатbay/plan-nutrientpollution.htm.

Please put your fertilizer spreader away for the winter and share this information about blackout dates with neighbors, friends and co-workers. Help spread the word - but NOT the fertilizer, and help protect and restore New Jersey's water resources.

If this Barneгат Bay Action Update - Special Announcement was forwarded to you, please go to www.nj.gov/dep/barneгатbay/subscribe.htm to subscribe directly.

To learn more about Governor Christie's Action Plan for Barneгат Bay, visit www.nj.gov/dep/barneгатbay.

If you have questions about the Action Plan, please email DEPbarneгатbayinfo@dep.state.nj.us.