

Minnesota's Lawn Phosphorus Fertilizer Law

John Erwin, Dept. of Horticultural Science, University of Minnesota

Governor Ventura signed SF 1555, the Phosphorus Fertilizer Bill, into state law April 19, 2002. There are a couple provisions that will directly apply to the Minnesota greenhouse industry and garden centers. Note below that we are able to apply fertilizers for the growing of crops. Also note that

spilling of phosphorus must be cleaned up immediately. My initial 'take' on this is that this may impact applying fertilizers through an irrigation system with plant materials on an impervious surface such as in some garden centers. Beyond this, the only other impact, as I

read it, will be on what fertilizer products can be sold through our garden centers. I suggest that any garden center owner consider making a fact sheet for consumers. Feel free to cut and paste from this article to make your own. I will send a fact sheet out appropriate for consumers as a FAX

during the next 2 weeks as well.

For official interpretations, contact Jerry Spetzman at the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, 651-297-7269. For full bill text, go to: www.leg.state.mn.us/leg/legis.htm and enter "SF1555" under Senate bill information.

- **PREEMPTION OF LOCAL LAW – Starts August 1, 2002**

Local units of government may not adopt ordinances regulating the sale, handling or use of phosphorus fertilizers for the growing of crops (agricultural use).

Local units of government may not adopt ordinances regulating the sale, handling or use of phosphorus fertilizers for the growing of turf except for the following exception:

Exception: Local ordinances that regulate the sale of phosphorus lawn fertilizer that are in effect by August 1, 2002 will be allowed to stand.

- **FERTILIZER APPLICATION TO IMPERVIOUS SURFACES – Starts August 1, 2002**

Do not spill or spread fertilizer on impervious surfaces (paved areas such as sidewalks, driveways, and streets). Clean up immediately if you do. This applies to all fertilizer, whether it contains phosphorus or not.

- **PHOSPHORUS LAWN FERTILIZER USE RESTRICTIONS - Starts January 1, 2004**

Lawn fertilizer is restricted to 0% phosphate (P₂O₅) content in the seven county Twin Cities metro area, 3% phosphate (P₂O₅) content in other areas of the state unless it is for a new lawn, or a soil or tissue test shows a

phosphorus need. In those cases, lawn fertilizers with higher phosphate content can be used. (Note: The phosphorus (P) content of fertilizer is measured as phosphate (P₂O₅). The phosphorus content of phosphate is 43%.)

Golf course staff that have been certified by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture can use phosphorus fertilizer according to their professional judgment.

Local units of governments outside the seven county Twin Cities metro area can adopt the 0% phosphate limit, but need to inform the Minnesota Department of Agriculture of the change.

When applied, phosphorus lawn fertilizer needs to follow rates recommended by the University of Minnesota and approved by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture.

- **CONSUMER INFORMATION:** Needs to be provided by Minnesota Department of Agriculture in consultation with University of Minnesota, fertilizer industry, lake groups, and others.
- **RESEARCH EVALUATION:** Needs to be done MN Department of Agriculture in cooperation with the University of Minnesota and consultation with fertilizer industry, lake groups, and others.
- **ENFORCEMENT:** Local units of government will do enforcement under their existing authority. Violations are petty misdemeanors.

Widmer Fund Golf Outing

Tuesday, August 27

The annual Widmer Fund Golf Outing will be August 27 at the Daytona Country Club in Dayton, Minnesota. Funds raised support floricultural research. Additional information will be forwarded to you soon. For more information, contact Troy Lucht at 763-535-4695.



MINNESOTA COMMERCIAL FLOWER GROWERS BULLETIN



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
Extension
SERVICE



Published by the University of Minnesota Extension Service and Horticulture Department in cooperation with the Minnesota Nursery & Landscape Association

The Minnesota Commercial Flower Growers Bulletin is compiled and edited by John Erwin, Associate Professor, Greenhouse Crop Physiology and Extension, Department of Horticultural Science, University of Minnesota. Feel free to call with suggestions and/or comments (numbers below).

Issued in furtherance of cooperative extension work in agriculture and home economics, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U. S. Department of Agriculture. The University of Minnesota, including the Minnesota Extension Service, is committed to the policy that all persons shall have equal access to its' programs, facilities and employment without regard to race, religion, color, sex, national origin, handicap, age, veteran status or sexual orientation.

The Bulletin is published under the auspices of the Commercial Flower Growers Committee of the Minnesota Nursery and Landscape Association.
©2002 MNLA. 651-633-4987

Send comments to:

Department of Horticultural Science
1970 Folwell Ave. • St. Paul MN 55108
Phone: 612-624-9703 • Fax: 612-624-4941
Email: erwin001@tc.umn.edu



WE'RE ON THE WEB

Minnesota Nursery &
Landscape Association

www.mnlandscape.org

U of M. Hort. Dept.

www.florifacts.umn.edu