



## Further information?

The South East Regional Centre for Urban Landcare (SERCUL) runs a program entitled The Phosphorus Awareness Project. This project seeks to promote the appropriate use of fertilisers (through the FertiliseWISE campaign) and detergents, and enhance people's awareness of the link between their backyards and the surrounding surface and groundwater systems.

Volunteering opportunities are available or for more information contact **Amy Krupa**, the Coordinator of the Phosphorus Awareness Project on **9458 5664** or via email: [amykrupa@sercul.org.au](mailto:amykrupa@sercul.org.au)

Alternatively, visit the SERCUL website at [www.sercul.org.au/pag.html](http://www.sercul.org.au/pag.html)

# FertiliseWISE

Protect and  
maintain our  
local water  
supplies

*Looking after all our water needs*



With the current pressure on Western Australia's water resources, it's time for us all to do our bit to protect and maintain them.

### *Did you know?*

Traditional chemical fertilisers only add nutrients to your garden – not organic matter. This matter is essential for supporting life in your soil. Consider using an organic fertiliser in your garden instead; such as compost or products derived from worm farming. Fish emulsions and seaweed products are also great and are readily available from nurseries and supermarkets.

## What's the problem?

Fertilisers are a major contributor to surface and groundwater contamination due to the chemicals contained within them, especially phosphorus. Phosphorus is present in the natural environment in low levels, but due to many human activities it readily accumulates and seeps into our groundwater systems – the same groundwater systems that we rely on for much of our freshwater consumption needs. Additionally, fertilisers run off into the stormwater system through roadside drains, collect in sumps and leach into the groundwater system.

Fertilisers also wash into the river and sea, creeks and swamps, with the potential to do major damage to reefs and aquatic life.

There are many ways in which we can alter our behaviour to reduce the risks of fertilisers affecting our local water supplies.

## What you can do to help?

- Minimise lawn areas and use plants that don't need fertiliser.
- Grow local native plants – they require less water and fertiliser.
- Use organic fertilisers rather than chemical ones.
- If you must use a chemical fertiliser, look for one that is phosphorus free. Use a nitrogen to phosphorus to potassium (N:P:K) ratio of 10:0:6.
- Use a slow-release fertiliser.
- Only apply sparingly in spring or early autumn, not in winter or summer.
- Fertilise only when symptoms of deficiency occur e.g. yellowing.
- Use liquid fertiliser if you have a subsurface irrigation system.
- Install a worm farm and use the worm castings at a rate of 1:100 with water as a liquid fertiliser on your plants.
- Compost your garden waste.
- Don't over water.
- Don't fertilise near waterways or road verges.
- Don't let grass clippings or leaves go down the drain.
- Wash your car on the lawn (if you have any!) not on the driveway.
- Pick up after your dog.
- Use phosphorus-free detergents (always read the labels).

