

To *Starve the Algae & Save the Lake*, homeowners can:

- ***Set mower blades higher.*** The ideal height for a healthy lawn is 3 inches. Setting mower blades to this higher height allows grass to take root and grow stronger.
- ***Let clippings lie.*** Rather than bagging lawn clippings, homeowners can naturally fertilize their lawns by letting clippings lie. As the clippings decompose, they will feed your lawn naturally.
- ***Aerate the lawn.*** Aerating lawns regularly breaks up compact soil. That allows the soil to absorb water and nutrients fully for a healthier lawn. Aeration also helps lawns to better filter any nutrients or pollutants that run off of roadways, rooftops or driveways, preventing them from reaching the lake.
- ***Turn leaves into mulch.*** Leaves can provide valuable nutrients to lawns. In the fall, homeowners can mow over leaves for an instant nutrient boost for lawns, or leaves can be raked into a pile and allowed to decompose over the winter for a spring compost that's perfect for flower beds and gardens.
- ***Plant grasses that thrive in the local climate.*** Seeding lawns with fescue grass can save homeowners from needing fertilizers or extra care. These grasses are better suited to North Georgia and they will require less frequent cutting and less fertilization to thrive.
- ***Plant rain gardens and shoreline buffers.*** Rain gardens and shoreline buffers are swales of native trees, shrubs, grasses and wildflowers that are specifically designed to intercept and slow runoff before it reaches the lake, a stream or a drain. Planting rain gardens and buffers along Lake Lanier shorelines and tributaries helps filter nutrient runoff to the lake.
- ***Replant portions of the yard with native species.*** Homeowners can have a positive impact on the health of the Lanier Watershed by naturalizing portions of their lawns. Native flowers, grasses, shrubs and trees grow deep roots that can help filter nutrients from water entering the watershed. They also benefit native wildlife and pollinators and reduce yard maintenance.
- ***Reduce excessive application of fertilizer on lawns;*** use soil tests to determine fertilization needs.
- ***Grow lawn species that require less input of nitrogen and phosphorus fertilizers*** such as fine fescues or turf-type tall fescue cultivars that have been shown to grow under low input of fertilizer and water
- ***Properly maintain septic tanks and fields.***
- ***Clean up pet waste*** and isolate livestock from water bodies.
- ***Corps of Engineers buffers*** adjacent to the water body should not be disturbed.