



Welcome to the first edition of Timely Turf Tips 2005! While signs of spring are everywhere, and the radio is bombarding us with ads for fertilizer and crabgrass control, *it's important to remember that it's still early in the season.* Although the weather has been beautiful, applying crabgrass control right now is likely to "leave you in the lurch" near the end of the season when the prevention components have been used up. *We will be sending out an email informing you when the time is right.*

Like crabgrass prevention, fertilizer application also requires attention to timing and rate of application with regard to *your personal lawn program.* Spring is an opportune time to let Hugo Feed Mill assist you in developing this program when you *soil test your yard.* In roughly a week to ten days, your results can be interpreted and a plan devised according to the needs of your particular lawn. **Steve Marier** can guide you through the process and answer your questions along the way. You can reach Steve via email (hugofeed@comcast.net) or telephone (**651-429-3361**). Due to the volume of calls this time of year you may need to leave him a voice mail with phone numbers where you can be reached at various times of the day.

Another good reason for soil testing is the *Phosphorous Lawn Fertilizer Law* Minnesota enacted in 2004. Whereas in 2004 the phosphorous ban was limited to the Twin Cities Metro area, it has now been *expanded to include lawns within the entire state.* The only exemptions to this are: *if a soil test indicates it's needed* and *if a new lawn is being established.* Hugo Feed Mill has carried and promoted the use of phosphorous free products for a number of years.

Timely Tip:

Apply Crabgrass Preventer before soil temps reach 55-60 degrees for several days (generally May 1-15) and water in. *Timely application is important to season-long control.*

In addition, the law makes it illegal to spread any fertilizer on hard surfaces such as streets, sidewalks and driveways. Fertilizer accidentally spilled or spread on hard surfaces must be cleaned up immediately to avoid washing into ditches and storm sewers. Everyone lives in a "watershed" (surrounding land area that drains into a lake, stream or river). Consequently, whether we live in a rural or a metropolitan setting, we all share the responsibility of protecting our water quality. Other factors such as leaves, grass clippings, eroded soil and pet waste can also contribute phosphorous to local lakes, streams and rivers. While it's important to collect these potential pollutants, *heavy raking of your lawn is not advised at this time.* *Gentle raking* is admissible – especially in areas affected by snow mold in order promote drying and prevent further growth. However, due to the past year's mild winter conditions, mold occurrence as well as vole damage should be very minimal. If you feel you absolutely have to power rake and/or plug aerate your yard, *wait until you've cut your grass at least twice* in order to give the lawn a chance to fully come out of dormancy.

This and previous "*Timely Turf Tips*" newsletters will be available on our web site, www.hugomill.com. Hard copies will be available at the Mill. *You can also print soil test forms on line* by visiting <http://soiltest.coafes.umn.edu>. For more information on Minnesota's Phosphorous Lawn Fertilizer Law, log on to www.mda.state.mn.us. From the home page, click on "Water and Land", then on "Lawn Care and Water Quality". Contact us or stop in with any of your unanswered questions and we'll do our best to keep you on track for a beautiful lawn this year! As always, thank you for your continued business!