



USDA-CSREES 2007 National Water Quality Conference

Integrating Water Quality into Master Gardener Training in a Nutrient Limited Watershed

Fertilizers are widely used by homeowners, public parks and golf courses to maintain and improve landscape beauty and quality. However, many homeowners do not soil test before fertilizing their lawn and gardens. Nitrogen, phosphorus and other nutrients in lawn and gardens are often higher than needed for plant growth. In particular, soil test P from lawns and gardens is often several times higher than from typical farmland. This may result in more nutrients lost in runoff. The Master Gardener (MG) program is a volunteer training program conducted by University Extension designed to help County Extension offices meet the demands for consumer horticulture information. It is a unique opportunity to raise environmental awareness by integrating water quality information into MG training curriculum. We highlighted nutrient buildup, movement and consequences for a MG certification class in a nutrient limited watershed. A stream model trailer was used to demonstrate available best management practices. A demonstration lawn and garden was established and maintained by local Master Gardeners to further disseminate water quality information to the general public. A majority of the participants have a good understanding of nutrient management for yard maintenance and water quality protection. This presentation will highlight how we educated homeowners to minimize non-point source nutrient loss.

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