

## August is Water Quality Month

### Maintaining Clean Waterways Starts in Your Yard with Proper Lawn Fertilization

August 3, 2016 (Milwaukee) - August is National Water Quality Month and a good time for residents to take a fresh look at how they impact water quality and can help keep waterways clean. Understanding how fertilization impacts waterways is a one place to start.

#### **MMSD, Milorganite: 90 Years of Environmental Stewardship**

The [Metropolitan Milwaukee Sewerage District](#) (MMSD) has been a steward of the environment for 90 years—before we knew what that term meant. It also manufactures and markets [Milorganite](#), an organic-nitrogen fertilizer.

Milorganite, manufactured since 1926, was a way to handle what remained of Milwaukee's sewerage treatment process. To this day, recycled, nutrient-rich material is kiln dried into an environmentally safe fertilizer rather than shipping it to landfills. "Milorganite is a tangible, value-added byproduct of our commitment to the environment as it has been for nine decades," said Jeff Spence, director of marketing for Milorganite.

"MMSD and the Milorganite team don't pay lip service to being stewards of the environment just to sell product or demonstrate how great we are. It's part of our DNA," explained Spence. "The common thread through all of our business activities is to improve the environment, especially our waterways. Caring for the environment is a shared responsibility, from industries to individuals. What we do inside and outside of our homes impacts the environment."

#### **Nutrient Runoff a Global Problem**

The United Nations and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) agree that nutrient runoff of nitrogen and phosphorus is the most widespread, costly and challenging water quality problem globally.

Although vital for plants, excess nitrogen and phosphorus contributes to algae blooms, fish kills, and objectionable odors and appearance in ponds, lakes and streams. Nitrogen in drinking water can be harmful to humans, even at low levels. According to the EPA one way to "significantly reduce the potential for pollution" from agriculture, a significant source of nutrient runoff, is to apply fertilizers "in the proper amount, at the right time of year and with the right method." The same practices apply to homeowners.

#### **Proper Fertilization Reduces Runoff and Helps Conserve Water**

Phosphorus helps produce healthy lawns, which helps keep waterways clean by naturally filtering water, but not all phosphorus is created equal.

Research conducted by the University of Florida compared the [phosphorus found in Milorganite](#) to fertilizers with other sources of phosphorus. It demonstrated that the recycled form of phosphorus in Milorganite is more readily available to plants and significantly less likely to leach into waterways.

“The phosphorus in Milorganite is insoluble and released at a rate plants can use. Sound fertilization practices, including the use of the most environmentally friendly fertilizers available, is one way we can all help protect our waterways,” explained Spence. Milorganite complies with all federal and local phosphorus regulations.

### **Milorganite Safe in Drought-Stricken areas**

Proper lawn fertilization encourages deeper, healthier root systems, which require less water, important for drought-stricken areas. “Milorganite’s phosphorus is only absorbed at the right moisture and temperature levels. It’s safe to use during drought.”

Milorganite doesn’t need to be watered in and won’t burn vegetation, because it lacks the salts found in most other fertilizers. Being predominantly organic matter, it also increases the water-holding capacity of soil.

### **About Milorganite**

Milorganite, celebrating 90 years of production, is one of the world’s largest and nation’s oldest running recycling programs. Headquartered in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, Milorganite products are manufactured and marketed by the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewerage District (MMSD), a regional government agency that provides water reclamation and flood management services for about 1.1 million customers in 28 communities in the Greater Milwaukee Area. Since 1926 Milorganite has been a world leader in supplying organic nitrogen fertilizer for professional and residential use. While revenue generated through the sale of Milorganite products does not make up for the entire cost to produce and market, our belief in beneficial reuse and recycling makes producing our value-added products the clear choice.

For more information on Milorganite and for lawn care tips, visit our website [www.milorganite.com](http://www.milorganite.com)

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