

## Shoreline Lawn Care DO's

Plant a strip of vegetation along your shoreline, 20 feet deep to help filter nutrients from runoff and slow sediment

Locate your lawn behind the shoreline vegetation strip

Avoid using fertilizers

Have your soil tested before using fertilizers

Keep a 30-foot buffer from water's edge when using no-phosphorus (slow release) fertilizer

Mow high—three inches minimum (you can adjust the height on the mower)

Leave grass clippings on the lawn

Sharpen mower blades annually

Use lake water to irrigate your lawn

Avoid herbicides

Use native plants in a shoreline vegetation strip

Use fescue grasses - they are better suited to the Northern Michigan climate



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## Shoreline Landscape Maintenance Tips

### Restore the Shore

One of the most valuable things a lakeshore homeowner can do is to maintain or replant a natural strip of shoreline vegetation. Shoreline vegetation helps prevent erosion, traps sediment, removes pollution from runoff, and provides valuable wildlife habitat.

### Want to enhance your shoreline with vegetation?

Below are some different approaches on how to get started.

**Stop Mowing:** This method is the least labor intensive and can provide quick results and a natural “up-north” style. Native grasses and wildflowers are some of the first plants to appear. This method is low-cost and effective.

**Designed and Formal:** A formally designed garden can still be an effective shoreline vegetation strip. The most effective design will utilize plants of different heights and adequate ground covers and mulch to prevent soil loss.

**Sideburns:** Stop mowing or add plantings 10-20 feet on each side of your shoreline. This method allows you to enhance the shoreline in phases and adjust accordingly.

**Happy Birthday:** Give your shoreline a birthday present every year by planting one new tree, shrub, or perennial along the shoreline. It might take a few years, but before you know it your shoreline will be greatly enhanced with beautiful plants.

**Size:** How big should my shoreline vegetation strip be? A shoreline vegetation strip that will provide the most water quality benefits should cover 75% of the shoreline frontage (e.g., 75 feet of a 100 foot property) and be a minimum of 20 feet deep.

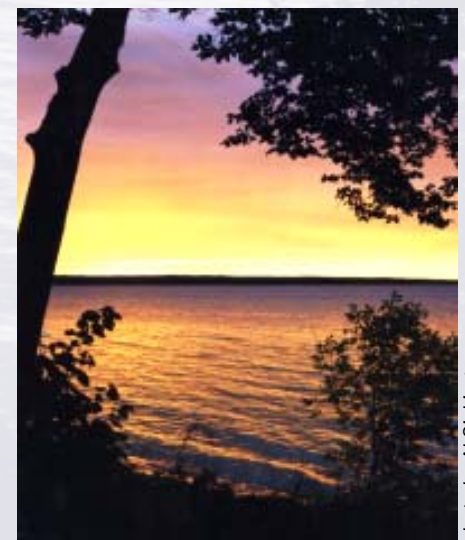


photo by Al Sickinger

## Want a great lawn?

Here are some lawn care tips suited for shoreline properties.

**Location:** Please reserve the shoreline area for a natural vegetation strip or plantings. The best place for a lawn on a lakeshore property is anywhere except right against the shoreline.

**Fertilizer:** Because nutrient pollution is the biggest threat to Burt Lake's water quality it is best to not fertilize lakeshore lawns. If you absolutely must fertilize—then please use phosphorus-free fertilizer that is slow release. Phosphorus-free fertilizers should still be used carefully. To avoid runoff of fertilizer from getting into the lake, avoid applying fertilizer within 30 feet of the water's edge and steep slopes.

**Soil Test:** The only true way to know exactly what amount of fertilizer your lawn needs is to have your soil tested. Soil test kits are available at MSU Extension offices for approximately \$10. The results of the soil test will tell you the amount of fertilizer needed for your lawn. Your lawn may only need one or two fertilizer applications a year.

**Mowing:** Taller grass is healthy grass. The taller the grass shoots the deeper the grass roots. The recommended mowing height for turf grass is three to three and one-half inches. Leaving the grass clippings provides an excellent source of nutrients for your lawn—but avoid blowing the clippings into the lake.



**Sharp Blades:** A sharp blade keeps turf grass healthier. Have it sharpened once a year for best mowing results.

**Watering:** Lawn turf needs approximately 0.5 to 1.5 inches of water a week, depending on weather conditions. Light frequent watering of 0.2 inches per watering is most productive for turf grass. Using lake water to water your lawn will also provide a boost of nutrients.

**Herbicides:** Herbicides are designed to kill plants and animals. If they wash into the lake they can harm aquatic life. If you have nuisance plants or insects in the lawn try safer alternatives (digging) or the least intrusive methods for treatment (spot treating with a spray).

## What should you tell your lawn care service?

Remind them to only use no-phosphorus fertilizer and to maintain a 30-foot buffer from the water's edge that is fertilizer free.

