

WEED & FEED DOES A POOR JOB OF MULTITASKING

ARTICLE FROM THURSTON COUNTY DEPT OF WATER & WASTE MGMT, "TALKIN TRASH" SPRING 2005

Spring is here and the grass is growing like a weed. In fact, the weeds are growing pretty well also! Before reaching for a bag of weed-and-feed, consider this: Weed-and-feed products can be wasteful, pollute water bodies, and bring dangerous chemicals into your home.

Weed-and-feed products are a mixture of herbicides (weed killers) and fertilizers. While multitasking seems easy, there are a number of problems with combining these tasks.

Use of weed-and-feed is inherently wasteful. In most yards, the weed killer is distributed over the entire yard, even areas without weeds. In some very weedy yards, the opposite may be true – the fertilizer may be wasted because there is too little grass to fertilize.

Weed-and-feed products also pollute water bodies. The chemicals wash into streams, lakes, or Puget Sound, or leach into groundwater – our source of drinking water. The chemicals are also tracked into homes, where children and pets are particularly exposed.

So what to do instead? Simply separate weeding and feeding.

- ❖ **To Weed:** Decide if weeding is necessary. View the lawn from across the street to see if the weeds are even noticeable from a distance. Would frequent mowing help keep them from setting seed? If there are only a few, try hand-pulling the weeds. If there are many, perhaps you could add low-growing flowers for a meadow look. If you choose to use a weed killer, spot apply it directly to the problem weeds.
- ❖ **To Feed:** Leave grass clippings on the lawn, or use a mulching mower. Grass clippings provide one-third to one-fourth of the nitrogen your grass needs for the year. Also use organic or slow-release fertilizers – they release food at a rate closer to the amount of time it takes for the plants to actually use the nutrition.