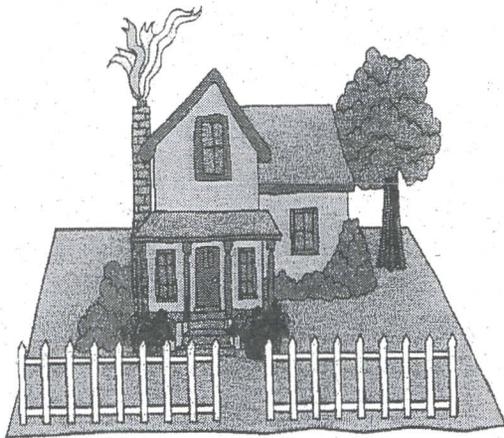


# HEALTHY LAWNS AND LANDSCAPES



Wellesley  
Natural Resources  
Commission



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Janet Bowser, Executive Director

## Imagine your kids playing on grass that isn't treated with pesticides.

Your kids can play on nice grass where you never need a "Keep off, Pesticide Application" warning sign.



## Imagine watering costs cut in half!

Healthy soils with thriving micro-organisms lead to deep-rooted grass. Deep roots require less watering, less fertilizing, and save you money.



## Imagine no mowing!

Turn part of your lawn into a landscape with a diversity of native plants, hardy flowers, ground covers, trees and shrubs. Low maintenance, native plants include blueberries, azaleas, bearberry, dogwood and redbud trees.



**Now is the time to make the move to non-toxic lawn care. For yourself, your children, your pets and the environment.**

**PESTICIDES ARE:** GRUB CONTROL, WEED KILLER, FUNGUS TREATMENT, INSECT SPRAY, CRAB GRASS PREVENTER, INSECTICIDES, HERBICIDES, ETC.

**Pesticides are poisons.** Pesticide exposure in humans has been associated with birth defects, numerous cancers, Parkinson's disease and other neurological disorders, male infertility and immune system problems.

**An EPA registration number does not mean safety.** The health effects of most pesticide ingredients, their break-down products, and their interactions are not well known.

**Lawn pesticides get carried indoors** by shoes, paws and air currents. Once inside, pesticides linger in carpets, dust, toys and air. Away from sunlight and water, pesticides can persist for many months.

**Pesticides contaminate drinking water.** Use of pesticides in urban and suburban communities contributes significantly to contamination of our water supplies.

**Children are particularly vulnerable** to the toxic effects of pesticides. Children are at risk for birth defects, childhood cancers and behavioral problems when household and lawn pesticides are used.

**Children are more at risk because of their size and behaviors.** In a recent study of preschoolers, 99% had one or more pesticides in their bodies.

## SIMPLE STEPS TO ORGANIC LAWN CARE

The easiest, most cost effective way to a beautiful, healthy lawn is to work with nature, not against it. A healthy lawn needs nutrients and microbe-rich soil to develop deep rooted, dense turf that competes successfully with weeds. Dense turf is beautiful and low maintenance. It naturally resists drought, insects and diseases.



**Pesticides are not necessary for a beautiful lawn.** In fact, they can do more harm than good. They kill the microbial life necessary for healthy soil and can kill the pest's natural enemies. This invites disease and insect infestation, which leads to more pesticide use and traps you in an unhealthy, costly chemical cycle.

### Basic lawn care tips:

- ♣ Spread 1/4" compost, or sprinkle organic fertilizer, each fall.
- ♣ Seed with a mix of hardy grasses.
- ♣ Mow high! Keep mower blades sharp.
- ♣ Leave grass clippings on lawn as fertilizer.
- ♣ Water only when soil is dry 6" down. 1" water per watering.
- ♣ Overseed in the spring and fall.
- ♣ Strive for a soil pH around 6.8.



## YEARLY SCHEDULE

### March & April

Sharpen mower blades.  
Raise mower blade to 3 inches.  
Test soil: UMass Soil Testing Lab, 413-545-2311, [www.umass.edu/plsoils/soiltest](http://www.umass.edu/plsoils/soiltest).  
Add soil amendments based on soil test.  
Re-seed bare patches, or apply corn gluten to prevent weed germination.  
Always leave clippings on lawn to fertilize.



### May and June

Check for weeds; pull out by hand.  
Re-seed bare spots.  
Monitor for insect pests.  
If you have grub damage, spot treat with milky spore (once every ten years) and/or with beneficial nematodes (once yearly for 2 or 3 years).

### August

You may allow lawn to go dormant during drought.  
It will green up after rain.



### September and October

Best time to seed (generously).  
Fertilize if needed (sparingly) or top dress with 1/4 inch compost.  
Aerate if soil is compacted.  
Lime if an autumn soil test finds pH lower than about 6.8.

### November

Final mowing at 2 inches for easier leaf raking.



## MANAGING YOUR LAWN SERVICE



- ◆ Specify mowing high with sharp blades.
- ◆ Request corn gluten and organic fertilizer instead of "Weed and Feed" products.
- ◆ Refuse routine application of pesticides.
- ◆ Beware if a lawn service tells you a chemical application is safe. Federal EPA regulations prohibit manufacturers from making pesticide safety claims, even if used as directed. All pesticides must be treated with caution.
- ◆ Never allow unidentified products to be used on your lawn. Request safety information and read it before application. Look up toxicity at [www.pesticide.org](http://www.pesticide.org).
- ◆ Be aware that chemicals listed as inert ingredients can be highly toxic.
- ◆ Take note: many pesticides persist in lawns and soil long after the posted 24-72 hours.
- ◆ Ask for an organic program. Know that an organic lawn can take up to 3 years to fully establish.
- ◆ Organic lawn care has been defined by the Northeast Organic Farming Association in their Standards for Organic Land Care. Order a copy from [www.massorganic.org](http://www.massorganic.org).
- ◆ Organic lawn service is available in our area. Check for current listings at [www.ci.wellesley.ma.us/nrc/pesticide](http://www.ci.wellesley.ma.us/nrc/pesticide).



## FIND OUT MORE

### Organic Gardening Supplies

Gardens Alive, 812-537-8650, [www.gardensalive.com](http://www.gardensalive.com)

Mahoney's Too Garden  
Center, Tewksbury 978-  
851-2712



Needham Garden Center,  
Needham, 781-444-2401

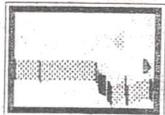
Osborne's Florist and Greenhouse,  
Marblehead, 781-631-2467

Russell's Garden Center, Wayland,  
508-358-2283

Windy Lo Nursery, Natick, 508-655-0910

### Local Organizations

Poison Free Lawns, [www.poisonfreelawns.com](http://www.poisonfreelawns.com)



Northeast Organic  
Farming Association, 978-355-2853,  
[www.massorganic.org](http://www.massorganic.org)

Toxics Use Reduction Institute, 978-934-  
3275, [www.turi.org](http://www.turi.org)

Greater Boston Physicians for Social  
Responsibility, 617-497-7440, [www.igc.org/psr](http://www.igc.org/psr)

Toxics Action Center, 617-292-4821,  
[www.toxicsaction.org](http://www.toxicsaction.org)

### Books

Common Sense Pest Control by W.

Olkowski, S. Daar, and H.  
Olkowski, 1991

Handbook of Successful  
Ecological Lawn Care by  
Paul Sachs, 1996



Tiny Game Hunting by

Hilary Klein and Adrian Wenner, 2001

### Recently Banned Pesticides

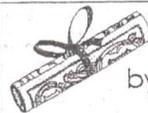
Do not buy products containing  
Chlorpyrifos (Dursban™, Lorsban™) or  
Diazinon, as the EPA has concluded they  
pose unacceptable health risks.

### New Massachusetts Pesticide Law

To protect children, all schools in the state  
must now restrict pesticide use. It's up to  
you to protect them at home.

### Herbicides in Compost Warning

Do not compost grass clippings treated  
with the herbicides clopyralid (in  
Confront™) or picloram, or allow grass  
clippings from treated lawns to go to  
municipal compost facilities. The resulting  
compost can kill plants.



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Environmental Protection.**

References for information presented in this  
brochure are available, along with more  
information, at:

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