

Pesticide-free Lawn care



SWITCH TO A "FREEDOM LAWN"

If you abandon or reduce the strict demands of the "industrial lawn" for frequent fertilization, applications of various pesticides, frequent watering and rigorous mowing, your lawn will gradually become a "freedom lawn" or "natural lawn". Plant diversity in your lawn will increase, as well as soil organism diversity.

Your lawn will shift back toward a more natural state, powered by solar energy, watered by rain-fall, and supplied with nutrients found in the soil. **Your lawn will be more disease resistant because of its diversity of species.** Less frequent mowing will be required. Develop your tolerance — **many plants that are considered weeds in a lawn have beneficial qualities.** Learn to "read your weeds" for what they indicate about your soil conditions.

For more information on responsible lawn care: www.beyondpesticides.org

A healthy lawn needs nutrients and microbe-rich soil to develop deeply rooted, dense turf that competes successfully with weeds. Dense turf is beautiful and low maintenance. It naturally resists drought, insects and diseases.

Pesticides do more harm than good to your lawn. 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.

Go Organic

The easiest, most cost effective way to a beautiful, healthy lawn is to work with nature, not against it.

BASIC ORGANIC LAWN CARE TIPS

- Spread ¼" compost, or sprinkle organic fertilizer, each fall.
- Overseed with the right grass seed in the spring and fall (fall is the best time to seed your lawn). Talk to your local nursery about the best seed for your area. Be sure that there are no pesticide coatings.
- Mow high and keep you mower blades sharp.
- Leave grass clippings on lawn as fertilizer.
- Water only when soil is dry 6" down. 1" water per watering.

MANAGING YOUR LAWN SERVICE

- **Never allow unidentified products to be used on your lawn.**
- **Refuse routine application of pesticides.**
- **Request organic fertilizer instead of "weed and feed" products.**
- **Be aware that chemicals listed as inert ingredients can be highly toxic.**
- **Ask for an organic program. An organic lawn can take up to 3 years to fully establish but it is worth the wait!**

To get your 12" x 9" lawn sign, email us at: metuchenpesticidefree@gmail.com



Sources: beyondpesticides.org



Pesticide-Free Metuchen

PROTECTING OUR HEALTH AND THE ENVIRONMENT



Is your lawn safe for your family?

Lawn care chemicals are toxic substances which can make you, your children, your neighbors and your pets sick. They pollute our waterways and endanger wildlife including the much needed pollinators.

Be part of the growing pesticide-free community!

Join our *Pesticide-Free Metuchen* group on Facebook. Help raise awareness about the danger of chemically treated lawns and spread the word about safer lawn care alternatives.



Protect your family

Pesticides are poisonous to a wide variety of living organisms including wildlife, pets and humans. Pesticides can harm your family.

Many scientific studies show that lawn pesticides:

- **Increase the risks of cancer, learning disabilities, and asthma in children**
- **Poison pets and increase their risk of cancer**
- **Remain on the grass even if it is dry**
- **Can be tracked indoors and contaminate homes**

The National Cancer Institute reported that a child in a household using pesticides is *seven times* more likely to develop leukemia than in a home that does not.

Pesticides are not safe simply because they are sold in stores across the nation and registered with the EPA. **EPA approval is NOT a guarantee for safety. In fact, according to the EPA, 95% of the pesticides used on residential lawns are possible/probable carcinogens.** One of the most popular, found in "Weed & Feed", was also used in Agent Orange. In addition, Glyphosate, active ingredient of Round-up, was recently classified as probable carcinogen by the World Health Organization.

PESTICIDES DISRUPT THE ENDOCRINE SYSTEM

Many chemicals that we use on our lawns very casually cause **long-term health problems** in ways that have only recently been understood. They disrupt the endocrine system, made up of glands and hormones that control almost every aspect of our bodies' functions.

Children are particularly vulnerable to pesticides due to their size, rapid development and hand-to-mouth behaviors.

Health effects of the 36 most commonly used lawn care pesticides show:

- **Over a third are possible or probable carcinogens and have been linked with birth defects**
- **Almost two thirds are linked with neurotoxicity and internal organ damage**
- **94% are sensitizers (chemicals that cause allergic reaction in normal tissue after exposure) and/or irritants**

PESTICIDES INCLUDE:

- Herbicides
- Weed killer
- Insecticides
- Grub control
- Fungicides
- Crab-grass preventer

Bee protective

Why are pollinators important?

Bees are responsible for one in every three bites of food we eat! Pollinators contribute between twenty and thirty billion dollars in economic value each year. Flowering plants rely on bees for pollination so that they can produce fruits and seeds. **Without bees pollinating these plants, there would be no fruits or vegetables either for us, or for livestock!**

Pesticides cause widespread decline of honey bees and other pollinators.



Protect your environment

In the U.S., homeowners use up to ten times the amount of pesticides per acre as farmers!

Lawn maintenance pesticides and synthetic fertilizers dissipate and run-off from their application sites, seep through the ground and **pollute local bodies of water including our reservoirs, where our drinking water comes from.**

Protect your water



Although commercial agriculture accounts for a large part of water pollution, individual use of lawn pesticides and fertilizers also play a major role. *Every body of water tested in New Jersey exhibits evidence of pesticide contamination.*

Water protection starts on your own property. If we don't put these chemicals in our yards, they won't be in our drinking water!

For more information, check out *New Jersey Friends of Clearwater* at: www.njclearwater.org