

WHY SHOULD PARKS GO PESTICIDE FREE?



Pesticides are toxic substances and can harm children and pets, and get into our waterways.

Scientific studies show lawn pesticides can increase the risk of cancer, as well as asthma, immune system and nerve disorders, infertility, birth defects, learning disabilities and behavioral problems.

Children are particularly vulnerable to due their size, rapid development, and hand to mouth behaviors. In a recent study of preschoolers, 99% had one or more pesticides in their bodies.

Lawn pesticides can also poison pets (particularly dogs and cats and increase their risk of cancer, as well as harm wildlife and contaminate drinking water.

Pesticides can get on your skin, clothes and shoes, be tracked indoors and contaminate homes, furniture, carpets.

PESTICIDES ARE:

GRUB CONTROL
WEED KILLER
FUNGUS TREATMENT
INSECT SPRAY
CRAB GRASS PREVENTER
INSECTICIDES
HERBICIDES

WHY GO PESTICIDE FREE?

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



Imagine watering costs cut in half!



Imagine little to no mowing!



For More Information

Clean Water Action &
Clean Water Fund

198 Brighton Avenue
Long Branch, NJ 07740

Phone: 732-963-9714
Email: njcwa@cleanwater.org

www.cleanwateraction.org/nj



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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.



YEARLY SCHEDULE

March & April

- ✓ Sharpen mower blades.
- ✓ Raise mower blade to 3 inches.
- ✓ Test soil: Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Essex County, 973-268-3551, www.ifplantscouldtalk.rutgers.edu/factsheets
- ✓ 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 nematode worms (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



- ♦ **Set mower 3" - 4".** Taller grass shades out weeds (like crabgrass). Mow lawn as needed, never cutting more than 1/3 of leaf blade at a time and leave grass clippings on lawn for nutrient recycling.
- ♦ **Request corn gluten** and organic fertilizer instead of "Weed and Feed" products.
- ♦ **Refuse routine application** of pesticides, but if pesticides are used, make sure they are handled properly and applied sparingly by a licensed professional.
- ♦ **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
- ♦ **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.** An organic lawn can take up to 3 years to fully establish. You can obtain "Standards for Organic Land Care from NOFA at: www.organiclandcare.net.