

Do you dream of a beautiful lawn?

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, insects, disease and drought.

Pesticides may not be necessary for your lawn depending on environmental conditions and your expectations. Over-applied or otherwise misused pesticides can negatively affect beneficial microbial populations and natural enemies of turf pests.

LAWN CARE TIPS

Use high quality, organic products that promote a healthy soil biology

Use seed that is diverse in species type and drought tolerant

Mow high and keep your mower blades sharp

Leave clippings rather than collecting

Water less, but water deep

Overseed in the spring and fall when rainfall is expected and soil temperatures are ideal for root and shoot growth

IT'S THE LAW

New Regulations on the Use of Phosphorus Containing Fertilizer 330 CMR 31.00

What does the new law cover?

The new nutrient law regulates the application of Phosphorus Containing Fertilizer and states that commercial companies and private property owners shall comply with the law and follow best management practices.

What do I need to do?

If you intend to apply a Phosphorus Containing Fertilizer, you will need to abide by the regulation. First, review the new law at: <http://www.mass.gov/eea/docs/aqr/docs/draft-nutrient-management-regulations.pdf>.

Second, obtain an approved soil test and follow the recommendations. Third, ask questions of local professionals and garden centers if you need additional help.

Are Organic Products Exempt?

Not exactly. Most organic products are considered Natural Organic Fertilizer. Organic applications that contain phosphorus must be accounted for and abide by the new law.

What will I see at the local stores?

Stores that sell fertilizer are required to clearly label and separate Phosphorus Containing Fertilizer from other types.

NATICK HEALTHIER LAWNS PROJECT

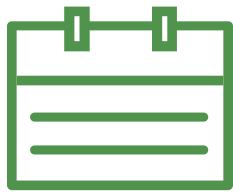
Simple Steps to Pesticide-Free Lawn Care

Natick Board of Health

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR



Yearly Lawncare Schedule

March and April

Sharpen mower blades and cut at 3 inches. Test soil and add amendments accordingly. Re-seed bare patches and return clippings.

May and June

Pull weeds by hand and monitor for pests. If you've had white grub damage, consider treatment and alternatives.

August

Consider allowing your lawn to go dormant during drought. The turf will break dormancy with cooler temps and rainfall.

September and October

This is the best time to seed, fertilize as needed and add topdressing. Aerate soil to add oxygen and relieve compaction.

November

Perform your final mowing at 2 inches for easier leaf raking.

Did you know?

The Town of Natick recently received a grant from UMass Lowell's Toxics Use Reduction Institute to pilot organic turf care at J.J.Lane Park, the Memorial School's soccer field and the grounds of the Bacon Free Library. Visit www.natickma.gov/1237/Land to learn more.

USE A LAWN SERVICE?

Follow these best practices.

- 1 Specify mowing requirements
- 2 Request a needs-based approach rather than a standard plan
- 3 Refuse routine or calendar based applications. Applications should consider the plant's needs, not the day of the week.
- 4 Beware if a lawn service tells you a product application is "safe". Every application should be treated with caution. Even organic products may be allergens or irritants to some individuals.
- 5 Never allow unidentified products to be applied to your lawn. Request safety information and read it before the application. Information may be found at www.pesticide.org or on the manufacturer's website.
- 6 Take Note: Some pesticides are formulated to remain in the soil longer than the posted period. Be sure to understand how your products work.
- 7 Ask for an organic program and consider alternatives. When beginning a plan, allow time for results, perhaps as long as three years.
- 8 Organic lawn care is available in this area. Check out your local garden center for recommendations.

PESTICIDES

What You Need to Know

Pesticides may pose a risk to you.

Direct acute or chronic pesticide exposure may cause illness or long term health effects. Some specific older modes of action products, such as organophosphates, can cause neurological disorders.

Children can be more vulnerable to exposure.

Children are often at a higher risk of exposure to outdoor pesticides and pesticides and other chemicals inside your home. Keep products away from children and monitor their behavior. The Massachusetts Children and Families Protection Act regulates both indoor and outdoor applications at schools and day cares. Natick-based schools and childcare facilities' plans can be found at: <http://massnrc.org/ipm/>. Consider using your school's plan as a model to follow at home.

Pesticides can be carried indoors.

Obey posting signs and the manufacture label. Any product that is accidentally applied to a walkway or driveway should be swept back on to the lawn.

Some pesticides can contaminate storm or ground water.

Do not apply products near water ways or directly to standing water or puddles. Avoid applications near storm drains and never pour any product or dump any lawn debris in storm drains.

All compost is not organic.

Do not compost grass clippings treated with herbicides such as clopyralid (know as Confront TM) or picloram. Know where your compost comes from and how it is made.

ALWAYS READ THE LABEL