

Growing Green Living Healthy

Did you know...

American homeowners use more pesticides per acre than farmers. Many of the commercial chemicals used by both homeowners and lawn care professionals can be extremely harmful to people, pets, and the environment.

Fortunately, you don't have to choose between a healthy neighborhood and a beautiful yard. It's easy to grow green grass and a lush garden without using potentially poisonous substances. Just follow a few simple guidelines:

- Practice Simple, Safe Maintenance
- Encourage Beneficial Organisms
- Avoid Pesticides

Commit to these simple principles and watch your lawn grow stronger and greener season after season. At the same time, you'll be protecting your family and your neighborhood and saving money by avoiding expensive, potentially harmful chemicals.



Dear

We all share a love for lush green lawns and beautiful gardens. We also care about the health and safety of our families, our neighbors, and our pets.

Enclosed is some useful information on how to grow green lawns and spectacular gardens without using powerful chemicals that can poison our neighborhood and our planet.

Together, we can make our neighborhood as safe as it is beautiful.

Sincerely,

Your caring neighbor



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For more information on maintaining
your yard without chemicals, visit:
www.ecocenter.org

garden green



Pesticide-Free

Grass should be a safe place
for children, pets, and bare feet.



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Simple, Safe Maintenance Tips

- **Mow high** (3 - 3 1/2 inches).
- Use a **sharp** blade.
- **Don't cut** when grass is wet.
- **Leave clippings** on the lawn.
- **Overseed** bare patches with ryegrass or fescue.
- **Topdress** with your own compost or an organic fertilizer.
- Prevent weeds on established turf with **corn-gluten meal**.

A Healthy Lawn Depends on Beneficial Organisms

- **Earthworms** aerate and fertilize.
- **Beetles** eat aphids, slugs, and snails. They break down decay.
- **Ants** aerate and help control insect pests and diseases.
- **Microscopic worms** (nematodes) keep grubs in check.
- **Lady beetles** feed on aphids, mealybugs, scale, and spider mites.
- **Dragonflies and damselflies** eat mosquitoes, aphids, and other pests.
- **Birds and bats** devour mosquitoes and other pests.

Encourage these beneficial organisms by planting native trees, plants, and flowers and by **avoiding both pesticides and synthetic fertilizers**.

What Are Pesticides?

Pesticide is a broad, umbrella term that includes:

- **Insecticides**
- **Herbicides**
- **Fungicides**

Weed and Feed products contain both pesticides (herbicides) and synthetic fertilizers.

"Pesticides are designed to kill living organisms." U.S. Environmental Protection Agency



Pesticides Do Not Stay Put

- **Pesticides drift on wind** currents and are carried into homes on pet paws, shoes, gardening gloves, and other clothing.
- **Children and pets ingest** pesticides while playing on the grass.
- Pesticides and synthetic fertilizers can **runoff from our yards and enter waterways** that flow into Lake Saint Clair. Concentrations of pesticides in surface waters rise each spring with heavy residential use.

Pesticides Deplete the Soil and Poison Beneficial Organisms

Pesticides reduce biological activity and **deplete the soil**, slowing natural decomposition and causing thatch.

Without the support of healthy soil, grass and garden plants become **weak and vulnerable to pests and disease**.

Soils depleted of nutrients and biological activity welcome weeds.

Scientific Studies Confirm the Dangers of Pesticides

Studies show that lawn pesticides are linked to:

- **Cancer in people and pets.**
- **Parkinson's disease.**
- **Learning delays.**
- **Reduced IQ levels.**
- **Birth defects.**
- **ADHD.**
- **Asthma.**
- **Decline of honeybees.**

Avoid Common Lawn Chemicals such as:

- **2,4-D**
- **Carbaryl**
- **Malathion**
- **Pendimethalin**
- **Imidacloprid**
- **Atrazine**
- **Mecoprop**
- **Dicamba**