

NATURAL LAWN CARE TIPS

- Sharpen mower blades and mow high and often to discourage thatch buildup.
- Try using a manual mower to avoid the cost and mess of gasoline.
- Water deeply, but not often, to sustain a robust grass root system.
- Reseed in the fall to repair bare spots.
- Routine *grasscycling* and semi-annual *compost* applications will develop healthy soil by building its organic carbon and nutrient content.

NATURAL WEED REMOVAL TIPS

- Spray weed seedlings with vinegar.
- Hand pick weeds in mid-to-late spring.
- Apply corn gluten meal to lawn in early spring to inhibit the root formation of common germinating weed seeds.
- Aerate the lawn for more oxygen.

HOMEMADE WEED-KILLER RECIPE

- Vinegar is a non-selective plant killer, so apply with caution to avoid harm to yourself and surrounding vegetation.
 - **3 cups VINEGAR** (*white distilled with 5%, 10%, or 20% acetic acid*)
 - **½ cup SALT** (*allow salt to dissolve into vinegar before adding soap*)
 - **1 tbsp SOAP** (*liquid dish detergent without bleach is safe and works*)

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- First, realize that just because a plant is not turf grass doesn't necessarily mean it is a weed that must be eliminated from your lawn.
- Consider gradually replacing residential turf grass with *natural landscaping* by planting locally *native species* of flowers, grasses, sedges, shrubs, and trees.
- Promote your safe and non-toxic lawn by placing a Lawns for Life sign in the yard for people to see.
- Before fertilizing, conduct a soil test on your lawn to find out if fertilizers are necessary.
- If you choose to hire a commercial lawn care service, select one that uses safe and non-toxic practices.
- Read labels on the products used and choose natural treatment options.
- Spread the Lawns for Life message with family, friends, and neighbors.

RELATED INFORMATION

- www.facebook.com/LawnsforLife
- www.bloomington.in.gov/environment
- www.beyondpesticides.org
- www.epa.gov/greenacres
- www.safelawns.org
- www.lesslawn.com
- www.siri.org/msds
- www.atsdr.cdc.gov



BLOOMINGTON
ENVIRONMENTAL COMMISSION



LAWNS for LiFE

Nurturing **your** piece of the planet



safe and non-toxic

ABOUT CONVENTIONAL LAWN TREATMENTS

- Conventional lawn treatments consist of pesticides (like fungicides, herbicides, and insecticides) and fertilizers.
- Pesticides, which are toxic by definition, do not stay only on the lawn where they are applied. They leach into soil, drift through the air, and wash off into the water supply when it rains.
- Excess nutrients from fertilizers wash off lawns during rainfall, enter local waterways, and reduce water quality.
- Lawn treatments:
 - leave residues that can be tracked into your home by shoes or paws and remain on carpeting, toys, and upholstery for over a year.
 - are toxic to birds, fish, humans, insects, mammals, microbes, pets, and especially children.
 - are damaging to bees' health, a big concern because bees pollinate 1 in 3 bites of our food.
 - contribute to the deaths of the 67 million birds estimated by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to die from pesticide exposure each year in the United States.
 - reduce natural biodiversity.
 - are similar to cigarettes in that their use has negative health effects that extend beyond just a personal level.



ABOUT LAWN FOR LIFE

- Lawns for Life is an educational outreach initiative of the Bloomington Environmental Commission with an ultimate goal of improving health and the environment.
- The core of our mission is to increase the awareness of the harms and risks from the use of toxic lawn treatments as well as advocating for attractive natural landscaping.
- Amid growing concerns about the global environment, Lawns for Life offers a way to have a rewarding experience *nurturing your piece of the planet*.
- Learn more by visiting Lawns for Life on Facebook ("like" us today!) or at the Bloomington Environmental Commission booth at the local Farmers' Market on Saturdays. Stop by for more information or to pick up a Lawns for Life sign to post in your yard (donations appreciated).



U.S. LAWN CARE STATISTICS

- 20 million acres of residential lawns.
- \$40 billion spent annually on lawn care.
- 78 million pounds of pesticides used on residential lawns each and every year.
- About 95 percent of pesticides used on residential lawns are considered to be possible or probable carcinogens.
- 90 million pounds of fertilizers used on residential lawns each and every year.

PESTICIDE EXPOSURE HEALTH EFFECTS

- Liver and kidney damage
- Infertility and birth defects
- Behavior problems in children
- Endocrine/hormonal disruption
- Childhood leukemia and brain cancer
- Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma symptoms
- Malignant canine lymphoma in dogs
- Seizure and skin disorders in pets

LAWNS FOR LIFE REWARDS

- *Nurturing **your** piece of the planet.*
- Protects the health of your family, pets, neighbors, and the entire community.
- Improves water quality and soil health, conserves natural resources, reduces a lawn's eco-footprint, and saves money.
- Creates safe and natural habitats for wildlife in your residential area.