

Alternatives to Using Lawn Pesticides



As we dream of budding trees and verdant lawns, there are environment issues to consider, the most important of which concerns the danger of chemicals that are routinely used for lawn care. Here is some information about the problem of these pesticides, and some alternative ways to have that green lawn.

What are the dangers of pesticides?

- Pesticides are poisons that can be inhaled, ingested or absorbed through the skin after application. They can have these effects for many days after application - endangering your family, neighbors, pets, wildlife, and generations to come. They are especially hazardous to children, the elderly, pregnant women, and people with chronic health conditions.
- Pesticides contaminate our water, food, soil and air, and also kill off beneficial weeds and insects.
- Pesticides can cause serious health risks even at low doses. They can contribute to cancer, and cause damage to the central nervous system, as well as the endocrine, respiratory and immune systems.
- Don't be misled if someone says that "just an herbicide" is being used, and that it is registered by the EPA. An "herbicide" is a generic term for a type of pesticide that is used to destroy or inhibit plant growth. All pesticides are registered by the EPA, and it is unlawful to market them as "safe."

How can I "green" my lawn while avoiding the use of pesticides/herbicides?

- Go to the website of **Green Decade/Newton**, www.greendecade.org, where you can educate yourself about the advantages of a more natural "**Integrated Pest Management**" system. Read their "Guide To Beautiful Lawns Naturally," and find out about **GreenCAP** - the Green Decade's Committee on Alternatives to Pesticides.
- Talk with your lawn services provider, if you have one, about options, as early in the season as possible, or switch to a provider who is more "green" savvy.
- A healthy lawn is a dynamic eco-system - it may have some weeds and insects. Have realistic goals, and be patient while you transition from chemical to natural methods.
- Avoid taking walks or exercising where you see landscapers have applied chemicals, even after the signs are gone. Teach children to stay away from areas where pesticide warning signs are posted.
- See the list of **Local Organic Lawn Care Services**, and **Organic Gardening and Landscaping Suppliers** on the Green Decade Website.