

NORTH CASTLE CONSERVATION BOARD----

HIGHLIGHTS ON **LAWN CARE & PESTICIDES**

Lawns provide important environmental and recreational functions. However, lawns can have a negative impact, especially on water quality, due to the use of pesticides.

What you can do to help:

- Use seed appropriate for your site, based upon light and soil conditions (i.e., Kentucky Blue Grass is well adapted for New York State conditions, and blends well with ryegrass and fescues). The best time to seed is between Aug. 15 and Sept. 15.
- Overseed thin areas to help grass compete with weeds, especially after a drought.
- Use slow release fertilizers since commercial nitrates can vaporize in the air, remain stored in the soil or leach out into ground water. Test soil pH level (should be in 6.0 to 7.0 range). Use fertilizers sparingly.
- Mow high, 3 to 4 inches. Contrary to opinion, grass does not grow faster when cut short. The opposite happens: it strives to grow in order to photosynthesize and live. Grass over 3 in. tends to shade-out weeds.
- Leave clippings on the lawn. They return essential nutrients to the soil, reducing the need to fertilize.
- Sharpen mower blades as needed to cut cleanly.
- Don't over water. Do not set sprinkler systems on automatic. No more than one inch per week, including rain, is adequate.

Remember:

- Pesticides can injure children and pets. Be certain to cover or remove toys from treated areas and prevent children and pets from entering the treated area for the stated warning period. Also, close house and car windows, and set air conditioners to recycle room air rather than bring in air from outside during application.
- Pesticides have not been studied to determine their toxic impact on children. Due to their higher metabolic rates and smaller bodies, children are more sensitive to potential toxic impact. A growing body of evidence links pesticide use to childhood cancers and as an asthma trigger, as well as to birth defects and various adult cancers.
- An EPA case study of canine malignant lymphoma reported a positive association with an owner's use of a popular crabgrass killer (2,4D) and a pet developing cancer.
- Some insects, such as ladybugs, are beneficial; pesticides can kill them all.

Become a Lawn Ranger:

- Learn IPM (Integrated Pest Management)
- Ask your lawn care service or Cooperative Extension Agent (914-995-4640) about natural lawn care
- Spot-treat weeds or remove them manually.