

Healthy Lawns and Landscapes Brochure



Chatham Township Environmental Commission (CTEC)

ctec@chathamtownship.org (973) 635-4600

Updated: November 2010.psc

CONTENTS

Beautiful HEALTHY Lawns and Landscapes: NATURAL ORGANIC LAWN CARE

- What are the main differences between synthetic and natural organic lawn care?
- What is natural organic fertilizer?
- What are the benefits of natural organic fertilizers?
- Ten Tips for a Healthy Pesticide Free Lawn

The Pesticides-Free Program in Chatham Township, NJ

Scientific References on the Health Risks of Pesticides

Recently Banned Pesticides

New Jersey School Pesticide Law

Reporting Pesticide Spill or Misapplication

Sewage Sludge in Fertilizer Warning

Commercial Compost: Pesticides Warning

Helpful Links

The Documentary “A Chemical Reaction”

SAFE, Beautiful Lawns and Landscapes NATURAL ORGANIC LAWN CARE

The safest way to a beautiful lawn is to work with nature, not against it.

Natural organic lawn care focuses on building a healthy soil—the secret to a beautiful, deep-rooted, dense lawn. Costs and maintenance requirements are lower with natural organic lawn care than with synthetic pesticide lawn care programs, after the first one to two years.

What are the main differences between synthetic and natural organic lawn care? Synthetic pesticides and fertilizers destroy the naturally present beneficial organisms in a healthy lawn’s ecosystem. This destruction then transforms your lawn into an increasingly needy “junkie,” requiring more and more chemicals to sustain it. Natural organic lawn care focuses instead on soil management techniques and long term results, building up the nutrients and organisms in the soil in order to make your lawn better able to withstand drought, pests, and other common problems. Natural organic lawn care also eliminates damage to the environment and to human and animal health caused by synthetic lawn care products.

What is Natural Organic Fertilizer? Natural organic fertilizers are made from composted manure, mineral, or plant products. If it doesn't sound like an animal, vegetable, or mineral, it probably isn't organic. Read the label!

What are the Benefits of Natural Organic Fertilizers? The benefits of natural organic fertilizers are that they feed the beneficial soil microorganisms, break down slowly, and provide micro-nutrients. Organic fertilizers are also less likely to run off your lawn when it rains than synthetic fertilizers. Nutrient runoff from lawns and farms creates nitrogen and phosphorus-polluted “dead zones” in our streams, rivers and oceans.

Ten Tips for a Healthy Pesticide Free Lawn

http://www.turi.org/toxics_use_home/press_center/press_releases/10_tips_for_a_healthy_pesticide_free_lawn

Natural organic lawn care basics, pictures, and videos from the Chatham Township Environmental Commission and the Bernards Township Environmental Commission:

http://www.bernards.org/boards_commissions/environmental/ec_organic_lawn_care.aspx

The CTEC Pesticides- Free Program in Chatham Township

Join our program! Go to <http://www.chathamtownship.org/CTEC/events.html> and click on “CTEC’s Pesticides-Free Program” to learn more. “Pesticide-Free-Zone” signs, with a friendly ladybug logo, are also available through our program.

Scientific References on the Health Risks of Pesticides

The Toxics Use Reduction Institute (TURI) at the University of Massachusetts-Lowell helps Massachusetts companies and communities find innovative ways to reduce toxic chemical use at the source. TURI was established by the Commonwealth's Toxics Use Reduction Act of 1989.

- Toxics Use Reduction Institute <http://www.turi.org/>
- The books and references for the Wellesley's Pesticide Reduction Project are very helpful: <http://home.comcast.net/~little.sarah/page7.html>
- Ten Tips for a Healthy Lawn http://www.turi.org/toxics_use_home/press_center/press_releases/10_tips_for_a_healthy_pesticide_free_lawn

Federal data from the U.S. Geological Survey on Pesticides in U.S. waterways and groundwater <http://water.usgs.gov/nawqa/>

Recently Banned Pesticides

Products containing Chlorpyrifos (Dursban™, Lorsban™) or Diazinon, pose unacceptable health risks—as per the Environmental Protection Agency <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/health/human.htm#healtheffects>

Other Useful Links about pesticides:

- [How to Read a Pesticide Label](#)
- [New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection](#) website
- [U.S. EPA Office of Pesticide Programs](#)
- [U.S. EPA Compliance Assistance Center](#)
- [National Pesticide Information Center](#) a toll-free telephone service that provides pesticide information including recognition and management of pesticide poisoning.
- [Federal Register](#)
- SafeLawns.org <http://www.safelawns.org/about.cfm>
- View the documentary film “**A Chemical Reaction**” (showings are hosted by our Chatham Township Environmental Commission with Chatham Borough’s Green Initiatives Committee—go to <http://www.chathamtownship.org/CTEC/events.html> and click on our “[Eco Films & Discussion Series](#)”, or to see the film trailer go to http://pfzmedia.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=53

New Jersey School Pesticide Law

New Jersey's 'School IPM Act' was enacted on December 12, 2002. To protect children, all schools in the state must now restrict pesticide use. For an overview of the law, refer to the EPA's summary <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/enforcement/pcp/ipm-laws.htm> As for at home--it's up to you to protect your children at home. Additional information at www.pestmanagement.rutgers.edu/ipm/schoolipm.

Reporting Pesticide Spill or Misapplication

If you see anyone dumping pesticides or applying them in an inappropriate way, or see an accidental spill occur, you need to contact the DEP. You can call the DEP's **24 Hour Hotline** - Bureau of Pesticide Compliance at **1-877-WARNDEP (1-877-927-6337)**. Your call may be placed anonymously to report the problem. Additional information can be found at <http://www.nj.gov/dep/enforcement/pcp/bpc-complaint.htm>

For a pesticide health emergency, call the New Jersey Poison Information System at 1-800-222-1222.

Any person required to be licensed as a pesticide applicator must immediately report spills that meet the "reportable pesticide spill" definition in NJAC 7:30, Subchapter 9.

Sewage Sludge in Fertilizer Warning

Sewage sludge-based organic fertilizer, such as Milorganite, Oceangro, Allgro, and Meadowlife, may contain elevated concentrations of metals and other potentially toxic materials. Metal levels in sewage sludge-based fertilizers are generally higher than metal levels in animal and plant-based organic fertilizers and background soils. Read product labels to find animal and vegetable based organic fertilizers. The Washington State Department of Agriculture has an online database reporting the concentrations of nine metals for each fertilizer sold in their state: <http://agr.wa.gov/PestFert/Fertilizers/Metals.htm>

Commercial Compost: Pesticides Warning

Be aware that conventional compost is likely to contain pesticides. Consider making your own compost. If your grass or other "greens" (plants, shrubs, tree leaves, etc.) were treated with pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, etc., then do not compost those materials. For information about composters, composting, and/or purchasing a backyard composter, visit the Chatham Township Environmental Commission (CTEC)'s composting webpage at <http://www.chathamtownship.org/CTEC/CompostersRainBarrels-Multi-Municipalities.pdf> and learn more about CTEC's "Save It To Spade It Program. OR email the Chatham Township Environmental Commission at CTEC@chathamtownship.org.

Helpful Links

www.grassrootsinfo.org On this site, there is also a page with an excellent summary of the harms of pesticides and a helpful links page too at <http://www.grassrootsinfo.org/pesticides.html>

<http://www.ghlp.org/tips.html> helpful Green Lawn Card (click on the link at the right of the page)

<http://www.beyondpesticides.org/pesticidefreelawns/resources/index.htm#information> (scroll down to the headline "Coalition Pesticide Information," which also includes a link called "*Pesticides and Playing Fields: Are We Unintentionally Harming Our Children?*")

<http://www.chesapeakelandscape.org/> a "definitive" summary of "Conservation Landscape Guidelines"

For fun, play this Star-Ledger video (which focuses on fertilizers and Barnegat Bay)...

http://www.nj.com/ledgerlive/index.ssf/2009/08/debate_blue_barnegat_bay_pollu.html

The Toxics Use Reduction Institute (TURI) at the University of Massachusetts Lowell's "Ten Tips for a Healthy Lawn" at

http://www.turi.org/toxics_use_home/press_center/press_releases/10_tips_for_a_healthy_pesticide_free_lawn

Frequently Asked Questions about Pesticides from the National Pesticide Information Center <http://npic.orst.edu/> 1-800-585-7378

How to Read a Pesticide Label: <http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/label/> U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

For **federal data** from the U.S. Geological Survey on Pesticides in U.S. waterways and groundwater, see <http://water.usgs.gov/nawqa/>

U.S. EPA Greenscaping Tips <http://www.epa.gov/osw/conserves/rrr/greenscapes/owners.htm>

View the documentary film "**A Chemical Reaction**" (showings are hosted by our Chatham Township Environmental Commission with Chatham Borough's Green Initiatives Committee—go to <http://www.chathamtownship.org/CTEC/events.html> and click on our "Eco Films & Discussion Series"), or to see the film trailer go to http://pfzmedia.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=frontpage&Itemid=53

Helpful Books

Tiny Game Hunting, by Hilary Klein and Adrian Wenner, 2001

Common Sense Pest Control , by W. Olkowski, S. Daar, H. Olkowski, 1991

Handbook of Successful Ecological Lawn Care, by Paul Sachs, 1996