

IT'S AN EASY CHOICE



The goal of an organic maintenance program is to establish a healthy soil ecology that provides your turf with natural defenses against weeds, disease, and insect pests.

Families who want to maintain green lawns without the risks associated with pesticides need to know that there are better, safer alternatives – particularly where children are concerned.

Children put hands and toys in their mouths, crawl and play on the lawn, and have more contact with pets that may have pesticides on their fur. Children's livers, kidneys, and other detoxification systems are not fully developed. Pesticides last longer in their bodies, doing more damage.

WHERE CAN I FIND ORGANIC PRODUCTS?

Visit si.molloy.edu to find:

- Recommended lawn & garden stores
- Certified Organic Landscaper List
- Detailed information on organic lawn care for the do-it-yourselfer

SOME NAME BRAND PRODUCTS TO LOOK FOR:

- | | |
|------------------|------------------------|
| • Concern | • Liquid Fence |
| • Critter Ridder | • Organica |
| • Earth Tone | • Ringer |
| • Espoma | • Safer Brand |
| • Garden Safe | • Shake Away |
| • Garlic Barrier | • St. Gabriel Organics |
| • Hot Pepper Wax | • Victor Poison Free |



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DO-IT-YOURSELF ORGANIC LAWN CARE



GO ORGANIC

Over 10 million pounds of pesticides are applied on Long Island every year. This presents a threat of exposure to toxic chemicals and contamination of our underground drinking water aquifers.

Insects, weeds, and fungal diseases in a lawn are often symptoms of underlying problems. Conventional methods that address the symptoms with chemicals that can be harmful to human health and the environment are simply not sustainable.



The **organic** approach increases soil health, helps prevent disease with natural materials, and enhances soil life.

HANDY LAWN CARE TIPS

Mowing

Cut grass higher

- Longer blades of grass result in a longer root base which helps to retain moisture in the hot, dry weather.
- Longer blades of grass will shade out weeds and keep them from germinating.

Keep mower blades sharp

- Dull blades tear grass leaving larger surface areas vulnerable to disease.

Leave grass clippings on lawn

- This provides vital nitrogen to keep the lawn green, and will reduce the need for fertilization and watering.



- Watering should not be done in midday when you will lose much of the water through evaporation.

Fertilizer

- Fertilizer is less important for organic lawns because of the healthy soil ecology that is created.
- Do not fertilize in late fall (after October.) The colder weather curtails the absorption of the fertilizer thereby releasing the harmful chemicals directly into the aquifer. *Note: On January 23, 2009 Suffolk County Executive Steve Levy signed into law a proposal prohibiting the application of fertilizer from November 1 through March 31.*
- If turf needs nitrogen use an organic fertilizer. Your lawn can become addicted to toxic pesticides.
- 1/4" top dressing of high quality compost will add organic matter and beneficial microbes to your soil.

The big picture

Long Island's water supply is drawn from the ground. It is important to use fewer pesticides and synthetic fertilizers, which can leach through the soil and contaminate the underground aquifers. Synthetic nitrogen may also run off from fertilized lawns causing algae to grow in bays. As algae die and decompose they deprive fish of oxygen. Hypoxia, or a lack of dissolved oxygen, is already a serious problem throughout the Long Island Sound.



4 STEPS TO A TOXIC-FREE ORGANIC LAWN



1

Practice Healthy Maintenance

Changing the way you care for your lawn day-to-day is the most important thing you can do for its health.

- Set mower blades as high as possible (3-3.5")
- Water less often but longer
- Re-seed with a tall fescue blend

2

Give your Grass a Balanced Diet

Make sure your lawn has what it needs to thrive.

- Use organic fertilizers for major nutrients
- Kelp extract for a boost in the summer
- Trace minerals to promote healthy growth

3

Improve the Life of your Soil

Grass grows best in healthy soil rich in organic matter and alive with beneficial microbes and earthworms.

- Apply a topdressing of compost
- Build up beneficial soil microbes with microbial inoculates
- Leave grass clippings to return nitrogen to the soil and keep grass green

4

Control Pests Naturally

Lawn pests are indicators of problems in the soil. The best way to control pests, is to prevent them in the first place.

- Apply corn gluten in early spring to prevent weeds
- Introduce live nematodes to control grubs, webworms, chinch bugs
- Use milky spore for Japanese beetle grubs
- Compost tea improves disease resistance