



Audubon AT HOME

TIPS FOR CHEMICAL FREE LAWNS

“To all those chemicals, just say no! Compost is the way to go!”

As more studies document the threat to human health and the environment posed by synthetic pesticides and fertilizers that are routinely used in lawn care, there is increasing interest in chemical-free lawn care. Below are some generally accepted simple steps that can substitute for conventional chemically based lawn care.

- **Give Your Lawn a Boost Twice a Year - Early Spring and Late Summer/Early Fall - With These 4 Steps:**
 1. AERATE (compacted soil is biggest enemy of healthy turf, it favors weeds)
 2. TOPDRESS WITH COMPOST (1/4inch) (see below for brand names)
 3. TOPDRESS WITH ORGANIC FERTILIZER (see below for brand names)
 4. OVERSEED
- **Mow High and Sharp:** Set the mower blade at least 2 ½ or 3 inches high and keep it sharpened. The higher the blade, the more photosynthesis. This encourages stronger more viable turf and deeper root systems.
- **Leave Grass Clippings.** They will decompose within a couple of days to supply the lawn with substantial nitrogen and other necessary nutrients.
- **Water Infrequently and Deeply:** During extended dry periods only, water once a week deeply: 3-4 hours or enough to saturate to depth of 4 to 5 inches. This encourages deep root growth creating hardier plants that are drought and pathogen resistant
- **Soil Test:** For healthy lawn, soil PH must be between 6.5 and 7. For soil test services, go to www.umass.edu/soiltest. When you submit your sample ask for recommendations for organic soil amendments.
- **Compost Tea (optional)** can be applied anytime between May and early October to supply biology to the soil.
- **Address Grubs problem With Beneficial Nematodes:** elimination of synthetic pesticides will increase populations of birds, beneficial insects and soil microorganisms which are natural inhibitors of disease and insect problems. But if grubs become a problem, Beneficial Nematodes are the recommended antidote. Apply in late August/early September. See below for online source.

*Consult <http://safelawns.org/> for more how-to information
or www.organiclandcare.net for organically trained professionals.*

TURN OVER FOR EXAMPLES OF ORGANIC PRODUCTS

A SAMPLE OF THE MANY ORGANIC LAWN PRODUCTS

ORGANIC FERTILIZERS

- Chickety Doo Doo
- Fire Belly Organic Fertilizer
- Lawn Restore
- MegaGreen: an organic liquid fertilizer made of fish protein is very effective and reasonably priced. Available from www.multibloom.com.
- Earth-Rite
- WOW Plus
- Pro Gro

COMPOST

- Coast of Maine
- Fafard
- McEnroe

COMPOST TEA

A microbe rich brew made with high-quality compost can be sprayed on lawns to replenish and reactivate the biology in the soil. Compost tea does not have a long shelf life so must be applied when fresh. Home-brewers are available for homeowners and some landscape professionals deliver and apply compost tea. Visit www.organiclandcare.net, click on "Find a Landscaper" to find professionals who can brew and apply compost tea for you.

BENEFICIAL NEMATODES FOR GRUB CONTROL

Healthy lawn soil will host dozens of nematode species that keep grubs under control so restoring the soil biology is the key. While soil is being restored with compost, compost tea, and proper mowing practices, Beneficial Nematodes can be used to control grubs. North Country Organics is one source: www.norganics.com. The product name is "Grub Guard".

SPOT TREATMENT FOR DRIVEWAYS, ETC (SAFE ALTERNATIVES TO ROUNDUP)

- Burnout
- Scythe
- Nature's Avenger



Audubon CONNECTICUT

Audubon Connecticut, 613 Riversville Road, Greenwich, CT 06831
203-869-5272 ~ www.audubonct.org