

## Why you should be concerned:

**Healthy soil is the cornerstone to a successful organic lawn.** Pesticides can kill beneficial microorganisms in the soil that are necessary to establish a healthy lawn.

**Pesticides can be tracked indoors** and residues can persist in household dust and carpets.

There is increasing knowledge of the human health and environmental effects from pesticides. **Children are uniquely vulnerable** to harmful effects from pesticide exposure. The National Cancer Institute reports that children are at risk for brain and other cancers and are 6 times more likely to develop leukemia when lawn pesticides are used at home.

Many pesticides are classified as endocrine disruptors, substances that mimic, block, or interfere with reproductive and growth hormones. The full health effects of **exposure to endocrine disruptors early in life are permanent and irreversible.**

**Pets are also at risk** for pesticide exposure since they play and sleep on grass and sometimes ingest it.

Pesticide **runoff pollutes ground and surface waters**, which threatens the safety of our aquatic environments and **drinking water supplies.** Many lawn pesticides are highly toxic to aquatic organisms.

Many pesticides **remain toxic longer than the recommended “24 hour”** re-entry period.

Although all products are registered, the **inert ingredients may be even more toxic** than the active approved ingredient and may compose up to 99% of the product.

## Websites for additional information:

Healthy Lawns for Healthy Families  
[www.healthylawnsforhealthyfamilies.com](http://www.healthylawnsforhealthyfamilies.com)

Toxics Use Reduction Institute of UMass Lowell  
<http://www.turi.org>

Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA)  
<http://www.nofa.org/>

Wellesley Pesticide Awareness Campaign  
<http://home.comcast.net/~little.sarah/>

The Living Lawn Project in Marblehead, MA  
<http://www.livinglawn.org/>

Beyond Pesticides  
<http://www.beyondpesticides.org/>

Carlisle Pesticide Awareness Group  
<http://www.carlisle.org/cpag/>

Alliance for a Healthy Tomorrow, a Massachusetts citizens' initiative to establish new government policies to prevent harm to our health from toxic hazards  
<http://www.healthytomorrow.org/>

Pesticide Action Network [www.panna.org](http://www.panna.org) and go to “Resource Library” to search for products

For safe lawn care and non-toxic alternatives  
[www.grassrootsinfo.org](http://www.grassrootsinfo.org)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency  
<http://www.epa.gov/pesticides/>

Soil Testing Laboratories  
[www.umass.edu/plsoils/soiltest/soilbrocha.htm](http://www.umass.edu/plsoils/soiltest/soilbrocha.htm)  
[www.soilfoodweb.com](http://www.soilfoodweb.com)

## Organic Lawn Care Basics:

**Feed the Soil-** Compost is one of the best things you can do for your soil to support a healthy lawn.

**Feed the Grass-** Leave grass clippings on the lawn to recycle nutrients, add organic matter, and reduce the need for fertilizers by a half.

**Reseed Annually-** Thick turf is one of the best ways to control weeds. Seed in late summer or early fall with the right mix and make sure your soil is well aerated.

**Test the Soil-** Soil tests help identify the need for soil amendments such as lime and compost.

**Mow High-** Cut grass at 3-4 inches. This conserves water and keeps out weeds. Keep blades sharp to limit disease.

**Water Only As Needed-** Too much water can make your lawn vulnerable to disease.

**Weed Control-** Pull weeds or use an organic product like corn gluten to keep weeds from germinating. For spot weed control, try a mixture of lemon juice and vinegar.

**Pest Control-** Common pests can be controlled with beneficial nematodes. Milky spore powder is another effective control for Japanese beetle grubs. Using compost or liquid compost tea also helps to keep lawns healthy and pest-free.

For more information see Simple Steps for Organic Lawns Care at  
[www.healthylawnsforhealthyfamilies.com](http://www.healthylawnsforhealthyfamilies.com)

### **If you have a lawn care service:**

- You can have a beautiful green lawn without pesticides!
- Specify mowing high (at 3-4") with sharp blades.
- Request products like corn gluten, slow-release or organic fertilizers, or compost.
- Refuse routine applications of pesticides and weed & feed products. Weed and feed products contain pesticides.
- Beware if a lawn service tells you a chemical application is safe. USEPA regulations prohibit such a claim, even if the product is used as directed.
- Never allow unidentified products to be used on your lawn. Request safety information and read it before application. For pesticide fact sheets: <http://www.npic.orst.edu/npicfact.htm>
- Many pesticides persist in soils and lawns long after the posted re-entry time of 24 to 72 hours.
- Ask for an organic program. It may take up to 3 years to fully re-establish your lawn this way.

*"Every day of every week we are continuing in this country to expose children to chemicals whose toxicity is simply not known. As a pediatrician, I urge parents to think carefully about the choices they make, especially about pesticides." Dr. Philip Landrigan, Mount Sinai School of Medicine*

### **Local business partners offering organic lawn care products:**

**The Green Guy, Inc.** lawn care service  
[thegreenguyinc@charter.net](mailto:thegreenguyinc@charter.net) 978-928-5559

#### **Acton**

Butter Brook Organic Farm  
982 Main St., Rte. 27 978-263-1936

#### **Boxborough**

Bird House Garden Center  
34 Mass Ave. 978-263-1628

#### **Chelmsford**

Jones Farm  
246 Acton Rd, Rte 27 978-256-8065

Laughton's Garden Center & Nursery  
Princeton St. 978-251-4001

#### **Concord**

Mahoney's Garden Center  
1625 Sudbury Rd 978-371-1214

#### **Littleton**

Cataldo Nurseries  
41 Robinson Rd 978-486-9576

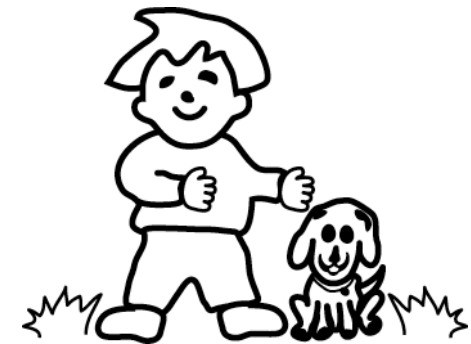
Cupp & Cupp Corp. 978-486-0800  
263 King St.

#### **Westford**

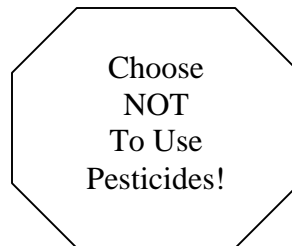
Eric's Greenhouse & Garden Center  
68 Boston Rd 978-692-9019

*"Never doubt that a small group of concerned citizens can change the world...indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." Margaret Mead, anthropologist*

## ***Healthy Lawns for Healthy Families***



***Join the effort to reduce pesticide  
use and protect your family's  
health!***



This project is a cooperative effort with the Towns of Acton, Ayer, Boxborough, Carlisle, Chelmsford, Concord, Groton, Harvard, Littleton, Westford, the North Central Regional Solid Waste Cooperative and local business partners. Materials developed under a grant from the Toxics Use Reduction Institute at UMass Lowell.