
Putnam Valley Central School District

Fact Sheet #2

Proper Lawn Care & Pesticides Control

CONNECTING YARDS TO WATERWAYS

Our yards are channels to our waterways. When it rains, a rainstorm can wash bare soil, fertilizers or pesticides from one yard to another, and ultimately, into our waterways.

Proper lawn care can reduce stormwater runoff, provide beauty and wildlife habitats and help protect water quality and water quantity. On the other hand, improperly applied fertilizers and pesticides cause invasive weeds to flourish, but more seriously, leach into our water supply systems, creating havoc to aquatic life and rendering our water supplies unfit for consumption.

HERE ARE TIPS FOR A HEALTHY LAWN PROGRAM

Here are tips, originally developed by Grassroots Healthy Lawn Program (GHLP), for a healthy lawn care:

- **FEED THE SOIL**
One of the most important things to do is to feed the soil by raking a half inch of or so of compost each spring and fall
- **FEED THE GRASS**
Leave grass clippings on the lawn. Clippings provide nitrogen and reduce amount of fertilizer by about one-half.
- **RE-SEED ANNUALLY**
To control weeds re-seed annually in the late summer or early fall. A thick new growth of grass will compete with the weeds for lawn nutrients and will eventually reduce weeds.
- **MOW HIGH**
Set your mower at highest setting and allow grass to grow between 3-to 4 inches high, allowing it to shade its roots ,conserve moisture and keep out weeds.
- **WATER LESS BUT LONGER**
Water, if needed, once a week in the early morning for several hours. Over watering can create an ideal environment for pathogens to thrive, leading to lawn problems.

- **CONTROL YARD PESTS NATURALLY**

Use natural insecticides and insecticidal soaps sprays to control pests or by application of beneficial nematodes.

PESTICIDES AND STORMWATER RUNOFF

Most pesticides not only kill a target organism but can also kill other natural organisms that are beneficial to the health and balance of the ecosystem. Many of the broad-spectrum pesticides do not biodegrade readily and remain in the environment for long periods of time, where they can be transported by stormwater runoff to nearby streams and drinking water supplies.

REDUCE PESTICIDES IN YOUR ENVIRONMENT

An increasing body of evidence reportedly suggests links between pesticide exposure and health problems. Here are some important things you can do to reduce pesticides in your environment:

- **PUBLIC EDUCATION AND AWARENESS**

Educate yourself on state, county and local school pesticide programs, such as Pesticide Neighbor Notification Law . Beyond Pesticides has several fact sheets on their website (beyondpesticides.org) that address harmful effects of pesticides and that promote alternatives to pesticides.

- **INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT**

Be aware of the Integrated Pest management Program (IPM) adopted by District. Under the IPM program, there are alternatives strategies that include prevention, monitoring, mechanical tools, cultural practices and the use of the least toxic product such as biopesticides and inorganics.

- **PESTICIDES DISPOSAL**

Dispose of pesticides properly and check with your local hazardous waste agency on when and how to dispose of unused pesticides.