

WHY SHOULD I PRACTICE ORGANIC LAWN CARE?

- ❖ An organic lawn care program will help you protect your family's health, improve the health of the landscape, and protect the environment.
- ❖ The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that about 80 million U.S. households dump nearly 90 million pounds of herbicides and pesticides on lawns in a year. In fact, lawn care is as much of a danger to our health and the environment as conventional agriculture is.
- ❖ Of 30 commonly used lawn pesticides 19 have studies pointing toward carcinogens, 13 are linked with birth defects, 21 with reproductive effects, 15 with neurotoxicity, 26 with liver or kidney damage, 27 are sensitizers and/or irritants, and 11 have the potential to disrupt the endocrine (hormonal) system.
- ❖ Synthetic fertilizers are chemically processed into concentrated, water-soluble nutrients that are available to plants immediately. But when there is more than the grass can take up, the excess washes out of the grass's root zone and into the watershed. The problem is compounded by the tendency of many homeowners to apply more fertilizer than even the manufacturers recommend.
- ❖ The EPA requires fertilizer and pesticide manufacturers to list only "active" ingredients on a product's label. The manufacturers are not legally required to disclose the inert ingredients, which can include harmful quantities of heavy metals. Inert ingredients in a lawn chemical will not kill your weeds, but there is no guarantee that they will be nontoxic to you or your pets.
- ❖ One of the most common herbicides in weed and feed products, a chemical called 2,4-D, has been linked to human health problems, including an increased risk for non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.
- ❖ Lawn chemicals don't just turn up in the environment. A study of indoor air pollutants found 2,4-D in 63 percent of homes. A different study demonstrated that levels of 2,4-D in indoor air and on indoor surfaces increased after it was applied on lawns.

- ❖ Lawn chemicals get tracked indoors, often onto surfaces where kids play. The National Academy of Sciences reports that 50 percent of contact with pesticides occurs within the first five years of life. Such repeated contact has been linked to numerous diseases in children; for instance, researchers reporting in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute found that exposure to garden pesticides can increase the risk of childhood leukemia almost sevenfold.
- ❖ Of the 30 most commonly used lawn pesticides, 16 pose serious hazards to birds, 24 are toxic to fish and aquatic organisms, and 11 have adverse effects on bees.
- ❖ Contact with low levels of pesticides increases miscarriage rates, and a study recently published in the American Journal of Epidemiology documented a link between residential pesticide use and breast cancer risk in women. Researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health found that frequent exposure to pesticides increased the incidence of Parkinson's disease by 70 percent.
- ❖ Like small children, pets can't read the "Keep Off--Pesticide Application" signs on your lawn or your neighbor's. A study revealed that exposure to lawns treated with herbicides four or more times a year doubled a dog's risk of canine lymphoma, while the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association reported that, when exposed to chemically treated lawns, some breeds of dogs were four to seven times more likely to suffer from bladder cancer.
- ❖ You can help improve the environment and reduce human exposure to lawn chemicals by raising awareness in your community about the dangers of conventional lawn care and the benefits of organic turf.

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