

Mindful Chemical Practices



If you choose to apply chemicals to your lawn and/or garden, always remember to:

Have your soil tested by your county Extension Service.

- This way, you know if you even need to fertilize. If you find your soil is nutrient deficient, you will know exactly how much you need to apply.

Physically measure the area of your lawn and/or garden.

- Fertilizer recommendations are based on a certain area. If the recommendation is 50 lbs/acre and the area you are applying to is only 1/2 acre, don't apply 50 lbs! The excess nutrients will run off your lawn and provide no added benefit.

Carefully read and follow the instructions on your fertilizer bag.

If you use herbicides, apply spot treatments.

- Applying directly to weeds that you wish to eradicate will reduce chemical runoff, save species that you do not wish to kill and save money by reducing chemical use.

Useful Resources

If you would like more information on how to get your soil tested or have other questions pertaining to soils and agriculture, contact your county Cooperative Extension Service:

Berkeley.....	(304) 264-1936
Grant.....	(304) 257-4688
Hampshire.....	(304) 822-5013
Hardy.....	(304) 530-0273
Jefferson.....	(304) 728-7413
Mineral.....	(304) 788-3621
Morgan.....	(304) 258-8400
Pendleton.....	(304) 358-2286

Informative Websites

- http://anr.ext.wvu.edu/lawn_garden/lawns
- www.raingardennetwork.com
- <http://www.chesapeakeclub.org/yard.htm>
- http://www.wvca.us/bay/resources_homeowners.cfm

Get involved in your local watershed!

- www.elksrunwatershed.org
- www.cacaponriver.org
- www.opequoncreek.org
- www.blueridgewatershed.org
- www.rockymarshrun.org
- www.sleepycreekwatershedassociation.org

Gardening and Lawn Care in WV's Eastern Panhandle



How our lawn care practices affect our local streams and rivers and what we can do about it!



West Virginia's population has increased 2.5% between 2000-2010 and continues to increase. Most of this residential growth has occurred in Berkeley County, whose population grew 37% in these past 10 years to 104,169 residents.

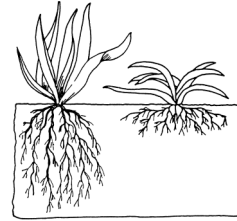
This increase of residents in WV's eastern panhandle has increased the area of lawns and gardens, ultimately increasing the amount of chemicals being applied to our soils. These chemicals (fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, etc.) run off into the Potomac River, the Cacapon River, Opequon Creek, Back Creek, and many other local waterways, polluting the water and harming the aquatic life. Nutrient pollution (from phosphorous and nitrogen fertilizer) is degrading our local water quality.

Through more mindful lawn care and gardening, the amount of pollutants and the effect that they have on our local waterways can be greatly decreased.

Best Lawn Care Practices (Non-Chemical)

Keep it long.

- Set blade at 2.5" to 3" to keep grass longer, shade out weeds, prevent water evaporation, and retain grass density. Taller grass will increase infiltration (absorption) of rain water by allowing the grass roots to become more established, ultimately increasing the health of your lawn.



Mow less often and aerate.

- These practices decrease soil compaction, therefore increasing your soil's ability to infiltrate and treat rainwater before it reaches the stream.

Leave Clippings on Lawn.

- This is a cheap and effective way to increase the fertility of your lawn and decrease the need for fertilizer products. This will add humus that retains moisture and decrease the amount of nutrient runoff from your lawn.



Reduce your lawn size.

- Plant native trees and shrubs.
 - This will reduce your lawn size and lead to less mowing (saving money on gas!), more water infiltration, and less runoff.
- Plant a rain garden.
 - This will beautify your lawn, decrease the area being mowed, and greatly increase rain infiltration.

Don't mow up to the edge of streams and roads; leave a grass buffer.

- This will decrease the amount of time you spend mowing, and reduce the amount of runoff from your lawn by allowing more established grasses and other plants to intercept water.

Keep mower blades sharp.

- This prevents the blades from shredding leaf tissue and creating wounds for disease to enter. Sharper blades allow the mower to operate more efficiently, saving gasoline.

Put a bird bath in your yard.

- This may attract bug eating birds, who will help get rid of pests in your yard without the use of harmful chemical pesticides.