

(Person's) The Lazy Man's Guide To A Safe And Healthy Lawn

Chemical fertilizers and herbicides are like steroids for lawns—effective, but a health risk. They kill beneficial organisms and degrade the soil. Step one: **Stop the chemicals. Then so this:**

Leave the clippings

Left alone, clippings break down, returning nutrients, such as nitrogen and potassium, to the soil, says Chip Osborne, president of Osborne Organics. Use a mulching mower for faster decomposition.

Mark your turf

Organic, water-insoluble fertilizers release nitrogen slowly and steadily. They don't affect soil life—a good thing—and are gentler on your grass. Doug Oster, author of *Tomatoes Garlic Basil*, recommends Jonathan Green products (jonathangreen.com). Or feed the lawn with compost tea, which is organic matter steeped in water, says Elaine Ingham, Ph.D., president of Soil Foodweb.

Plant Dutch clover

This tough plant was once a common component of lawns, but it was wiped out by modern weed killers. Bring it back by overseeding your lawn with clover, or just varieties of hardy seed, which will add nitrogen to your grass, Oster says.

Water carefully

Deep watering every couple of weeks is better than light, frequent drizzling—it helps the roots dig deep, makes them stronger to reach for the water, Oster says. Thick grass crowds out weeds.

Control weeds and insects gently

Corn gluten meal prevents crabgrass and other weeds from germinating if it's applied early in the season. For grubs, use milky spore, a bacteria that kills 'em dead but harms nothing else.—john miley

The Chemical Trail

The chemicals you spread on your lawn kill weeds and bugs, but they may harm your family and pets as well. Traces of toxins linger in the turf, the air, the water, and even your living room. Sometimes they become more toxic at low doses, according to a recent study published in *Science of the Total Environment*.

The air

Pesticides can remain in the air for days after they're applied, notes a 2008 EPA study. And if your home's air filtration system pulls the poison indoors, a lack of sunlight can allow the pesticides to linger longer, the EPA has found. In one study, indoor air contained detectable levels of 2,4-D (common in Minnesota), a widely used weed killer linked to sperm abnormalities and miscarriage.

The carpet

Chemicals you track inside may adhere to carpet, posing a danger to pets and children who play on the floor, researchers say. Contact with pesticides may increase your risk of melanoma, a *European Journal of Cancer* study found, while childhood exposure may cause leukemia and other cancers.

The soil

Children love to play on lawns, and they often put objects in their mouths. So they may ingest chemicals in the soil or absorb them through their skin, the EPA warns. Because their internal organs are still developing, their immune systems provide less protection than those of adults do, and their excretory systems may not fully remove pesticides.

The water

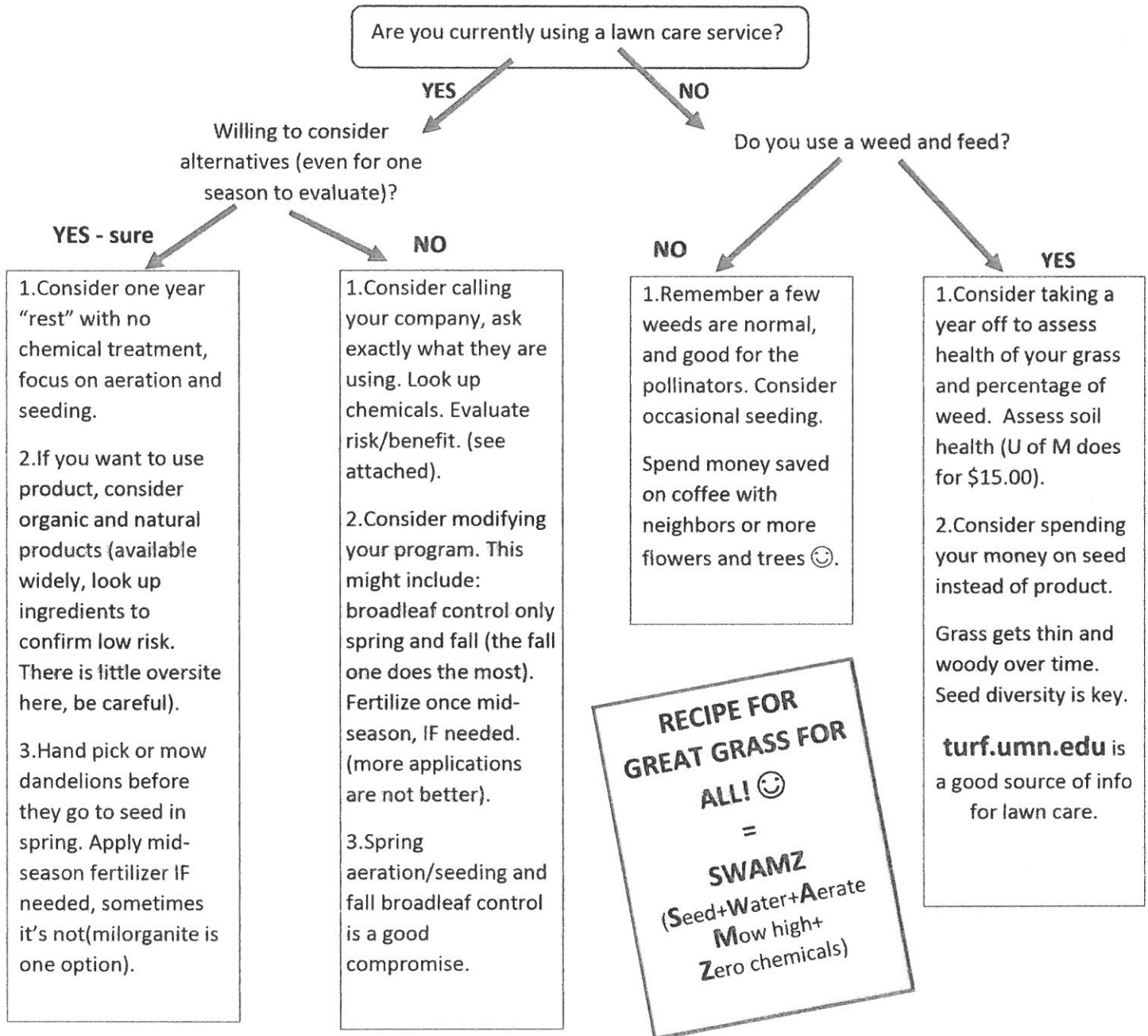
Residential pesticides wash into streams, eventually contaminating groundwater and drinking wells, the U.S. Geological Survey found. Each year, Americans apply 40,000 tons of atrazine, an herbicide that is now found in water supplies and linked to reduced sperm count and immune-system damage, Japanese scientists say.

Lawn Care Decision Tree

Periodic assessment of your lawn care is a good idea..... best practices change over time!

Sign up for this spring's FREE lawn consultation by emailing Heidi.niziolek@yahoo.com

This could help you decide what to do this summer lawn season.



Everyone likes a lush lawn, we all agree we want to make the best choices for healthy neighbors, pets, and nature.
We are volunteers and neighbors just trying to make a difference.

Lawn care choices are yours to make, no judgement. We are just providing information.

Lawn care companies market for your money, we just want our neighbors to be healthy and happy! Thank you!