

Reimagining Your Lawn

How YOU can have a Healthy Lawn that Promotes Clean Water and Enhances Wildlife Habitat



MANY HOMEOWNERS STRIVE FOR THE IDEALIZED LUSH, GREEN LAWN. HOWEVER, THIS PERFECT LAWN IS OFTEN ACHIEVED AT THE EXPENSE OF WATER QUALITY AND WILDLIFE DIVERSITY. IT DOESN'T HAVE TO BE THAT WAY. SMALL CHANGES IN LAWN CARE ROUTINES AND LANDSCAPING PRACTICES CAN REDUCE POLLUTION IN LOCAL STREAMS AND LAKE ERIE, AND ENHANCE WILDLIFE AND POLLINATOR HABITAT WHILE MAINTAINING HEALTHY LAWNS.

If your home has a yard, then you have a prime opportunity to improve your local environment and the health of Lake Erie. By committing to one or more of the actions listed below, you will be taking the first steps to transforming your lawn to a **Sustainable Lawnscape**:

- 1. Build from the Ground Up.** A healthy lawn starts with healthy soil. Build soil health by topdressing your lawn each spring with 1/4" to 1/2" compost or mulch. This will loosen the soil, improve its water-holding capacity and nourish your grass. Consider aerating your lawn prior to adding compost for even deeper benefits. Lawns with healthy soils require less irrigation and less fertilizer.
- 2. Less is More.** Are you sure you need all that lawn? Converting even a small portion of your lawn - think fringe areas - to native plants and wildflowers provides essential habitat for pollinators such as bees, butterflies and hummingbirds, while promoting the enhanced infiltration of storm water.
- 3. Reconsider Weeds.** Many common lawn "weeds" are only harmful to your aesthetic view of your lawn. Adjusting your tolerance for certain weeds will allow you to reduce your use of toxic herbicides, which can easily pollute nearby streams. Many so-called weeds are actually beneficial - dandelions, clover and other flowers are pollinator-friendly. Clover even adds nitrogen to the soil. Finally, consider non-toxic weed control methods, including manual removal with a shovel or hand tools, spraying with a 10% vinegar solution, or spreading corn gluten in the spring to prevent weed seeds from germinating.

To learn more ▶▶▶

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