



Best Practices for Creating a Healthy Lawn

THIS HANDY CHECKLIST, designed as part of the **Phipps Sustainable Landcare Services** program, will give you or your land care provider a way to ensure you're using best practices to create a healthy lawn. The Phipps Sustainable Landcare program and curriculum, modeled after the Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA) Organic Land Care Standards, propose methodologies for soil ecology, site analysis and design, organic pest management and more.

- **PLEDGE to manage your lawn without the use of synthetic fertilizers or pesticides (including herbicides, fungicides, etc.).**
Following sustainable practices will help you create a healthy lawn without the use of synthetic amendments.
- **ENCOURAGE lush lawn growth by maintaining your lawn height at 3 – 4 inches and reseeding bare patches.**
Taller grass minimizes weed pressure and develops deeper grass roots which aid in times of drought.
- **TEST your soil every three years to adjust pH and manage nutrient needs.**
Lawns don't need regular applications of fertilizers when they are managed organically. Test the soil to learn what nutrients may be lacking.
- **ENRICH your soil with a thin layer of high-quality compost each year.**
 $\frac{1}{4}$ inch is all you need to add minerals and nutrients to keep your lawn healthy.
- **LEAVE grass clippings in place instead of bagging them up.**
Grass clippings hold a lot of nitrogen and other nutrients that growing grass needs. Leaving them will increase soil fertility and reduce watering needs.
- **GO electric with your equipment.**
Electric mower and yard equipment are lighter, quieter and easier to maintain than gas powered equipment. Plus, they don't create emissions.
- **KEEP lawn blades sharp to reduce brown tips.**
Sharp blades will create clean cuts, leaving healthy looking grass.
- **AERATE and over-seed in the fall.**
Aerating reduces compaction, allowing water and air to get to the soil enhancing soil life and water infiltration. Over-seeding encourages lush lawns.

NEED HELP? Hire a Sustainable Landcare Accredited Professional who has completed training and pledged to provide organic, sustainable lawncare. View our complete list of professionals at phipps.conservatory.org/Landcare

