

**By displaying the
“SAFE LAWN, CLEAN WATER”
sign on your lawn, you have initiated a
safer environment for yourself,
your family and your community.**

**This brochure will help you
understand why it is important to reduce
our exposure to toxic pesticides, and
how to start up and maintain
an organic garden.**

Some commonly asked questions are:

Q. What are the health risks associated with pesticides?

A. According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), all synthetic pesticides are associated with some risk of harm to human health and the environment. Several types of cancer, neurological diseases, endocrine disruption and certain birth defects have been associated with exposure to common lawn care pesticides. For example, one widely-used weed killer, 2, 4-D, was a component of Agent Orange, and according to a study by the National Cancer Institute, has been associated with non-Hodgkins lymphoma.

Toxic pesticides can accumulate in our bodies as well as in our environment. According to Dr. Gina Solomon of the University of California Pediatric Environmental Health Specialty Unit, “Scientific research has proven that many pesticides and other toxic chemicals can cross the placenta and can be transferred to nursing infants in breast milk.”

People and pets track chemical residues from outdoors onto the carpet fibers in our homes where they may remain for years. Also, chemical pesticides run off our lawns and may contaminate our water supply.

Q. How do I start my organic garden or how do I instruct my gardener?

A. The first step is to know what methods and organic products are available. The following toxic-free guidelines will help you and/or your gardener get started:

1. Use natural, organic fertilizers instead of chemical fertilizers.
2. Use compost which enriches the soil with nutrients and microbes.
3. Mow the lawn at about 3 inches in height, since taller grass shades out weed seeds.
4. Water deeply (so roots grow deep), but every day is not necessary. Water early in the morning since watering at night may encourage fungus.
5. Leave grass clippings on the lawn after mowing to naturally return nitrogen.
6. For weed control, apply corn gluten to your lawn in early spring, or hand weed and put grass seed over patches.
7. For grub outbreaks, use milky spore bacteria or beneficial nematodes and/or aerate your lawn.
8. Use insecticidal soaps and vegetable oils for pests on bushes and trees (effective for indoor plants as well)
9. For mosquito control, remove stagnant or standing water where mosquitoes breed, or apply garlic oil.
10. Perform periodic soil tests to determine needed nutrients such as lime or calcium. (soil testing can be done at the *Cornell Cooperative Extension of Nassau County (516) 228-0428* or at the *Extension in Suffolk County (631) 727-7850*. Many local garden shops now provide soil testing services as well.

Q. Where can I buy organic garden products and how do I find an organic gardener if my gardener won't offer organic services?

A. Most garden stores carry some, if not several organic products. You can also obtain a list of over 25 stores that carry organic garden products in Nassau/Suffolk County, and a list of gardeners or arborists that offer organic services from the *Neighborhood Network at (516) 541-4321* or visit their website at: neighborhoodnetwork.org.

Q. Is maintaining an organic garden more costly?

A. According to most organic landscapers, the initial transition from a chemically maintained garden to an organic one may at first be more costly. However, after a few seasons, once a healthy lawn and garden is established, there will be fewer pests, disease and weeds, so expenses decrease in the long-term.

Q. What are additional resources on organic gardening?

- A.**
- Handbook of Successful Ecological Lawn Care by Paul D. Sachs
 - The Chemical-Free Lawn by Warren Schultz
 - Common Sense Pest Control by Olkowski, Daar, Olkowski
 - Long Island's Native Plants For Landscaping by Karen Blumer
 - Organic Lawn Guide by Long Island Neighborhood Network

Q. Who can I contact for more information on organic gardening and pesticides?

- A.**
- *The Neighborhood Network*
(516) 541-4321 or
www.LongIslandnn.org
 - *Grassroots Environmental Education*
(516) 883-0887 or
www.grassrootsinfo.org
 - *Beyond Pesticides*
(202) 543-5450 or
www.beyondpesticides.org
 - *NCAP*
(516) 344-5044 or
www.pesticides.org
 - *Bio Integral Resource Center*
(510) 524-2567
 - *Pesticide Action Network North America*
(415) 981-1771 or
www.pesticideinfo.org
 - *Organic Gardeners of Long Island*
(718) 464-3905
 - *Washington Toxics Coalition*
(206) 632-1545
 - *Children's Health Environmental Coalition*
(609) 252-1915 or
www.chechnet.org
 - *NYS Office of the Attorney General's Environmental Protection Bureau*
(212) 416-8300 or (518) 474-7311



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For more information, contact:
GNBCC at (516) 466-3307

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A Campaign to
Protect Our Health
and Our Environment

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