



Let it Grow, Naturally!

Easy Chemical-Free Weed Control for Your Lawn and Garden

Find out how easy it is to let your lawn and garden grow beautifully and naturally without using chemicals such as weed-killing herbicides that may impact you, your children, and your pets.

The Canadian Cancer Society, the British Columbia Lung Association and the Audubon Society are among just a few of the highly respected organizations that support reducing the use of pesticides overall, particularly when their use is cosmetic (or ornamental) and provides little or no health benefit to humans.

Our backyards are our private spaces, but also part of a larger landscape we share with our human and wildlife neighbors. With the right tools and information, we all can do simple things to create a healthier place to live for our community, and for the people and wildlife that live within it.

In this Guide, you can read all about:

- **Surprising Facts**
- **Easy Lawn-Care - Year-Round**
- **Moss Control - 6 Practical Steps**
- **Area-Specific Weed Control Methods**
- **Specialized Weeding Tools**
- **Plant Selection for General Pest Control**
- **Advice from the BC Landscape & Nursery Association on Hiring a Professional**
- **Preventing Environmental & Human Health Effects**
- **Additional Resources**

Visit your local gardening centre for great tips and advice on how to keep your lawn and garden weed-free naturally.

And remember just to... Let it Grow, Naturally!



Surprising Facts

Clover is not a weed, it is an important companion plant. Clover keeps your lawn healthy by naturally removing nitrogen from the air, and transferring it to the soil where grass can make use of it.

Lime increases the availability of nutrients to your lawn and promotes the growth of beneficial micro-organisms.

Healthy soil is alive with bacteria and organisms that make nutrients available for plants and aerate the earth. Using chemicals may actually break the natural cycles that keep your lawn and garden healthy.

Weed and feed type products contain synthetic fertilizers and herbicides, which could expose you and your lawn to unnecessary chemicals.

Easy Lawn Care Year-Round

A healthy, well-maintained lawn is the best defense against weeds.

Mow High

- Keep mower blades sharp to prevent grass from tearing and becoming susceptible to disease.
- Set blade height at 5 to 6 cm (never removing more than 1/3 of blade height) and mow regularly.

Fertilize Naturally

- Apply a slow-release organic fertilizer in the Spring and/or Fall to create a stronger, pest-resistant lawn.
- Many gardeners prefer using compost mixed with sand to improve soil drainage. Lawn clippings may also be used as a source of natural fertilizer.
- Avoid the use of weed and feed type products that contain synthetic fertilizers and herbicides such as 2,4-D.

Give Breathing Room

- Use a rake to gently remove thatch - the compacted layer of dead grass that prevents water from percolating to the roots.
- Rake when the grass is dry, but before seed-producing weeds have emerged.
- Aerate the soil by removing small plugs of earth to improve the condition of your soil.
- Immediately top-dress your lawn with compost and re-seed with a hardy species of grass.

Water Deeply

- Give your lawn about 2.5 cm of water each week.
- Apply water slowly in the early morning or late evening, once per week or as permitted by the Lawn Sprinkling Regulations.
- Choose to let your lawn rest in the summer. It will turn green after only a few days of rainfall and conserve drinking water.

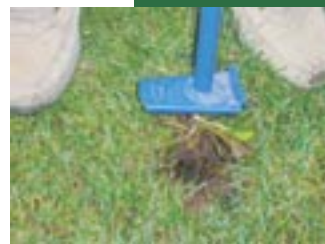
Prevent Weeds Naturally

- Promptly re-seed any stressed areas (ie. bare spots) on your lawn, and remove the source of the stress (ie. high traffic).
- For persistent weed growth get soil professionally tested and add lime to neutralize pH.
- Use a dandelion digger to remove occasional weeds.

Moss Control - 6 Practical Steps

1. Use a power rake or hand-rake to remove large, existing stands of moss. Don't over-rake, as this may damage your existing lawn.
2. Get your soil tested for pH. Soil pH test strips may be purchased from your specialty gardening supply store. Apply lime to your lawn (as directed) to neutralize soil acidity.
3. Top-dress your lawn with compost and sand to condition your soil and improve drainage.
4. Immediately re-seed any bare patches of soil with grass seed to out-compete moss and weeds.
5. Ask your local gardening centre about ground-covers that could be used to substitute grass in hard-to-grow areas.
6. Consider trimming any surrounding trees or vegetation to expose your lawn to more light.

Death of a Weed: Fast, Effective & Chemical-Free



Dandelion Digger

Area-Specific Weed Control Methods

These methods can be applied to a newly purchased home or to your existing property, as needed.

Weeds on lawns: Sprinkle corn gluten meal on grass to prevent the growth of annual weeds such as dandelions before they have emerged. Specialized dandelion diggers are also available in gardening stores for full removal of emerging weeds.



Weeds between paving stones:

Boiling water can be used to help control a weed outbreak in between hard surfaces. For larger areas, consider investing in a propane weed torch or water-powered weeder, available at specialty garden supply stores.

Weeds over larger areas: Cover the affected area with black or clear plastic, secure to ground, and leave for 4 to 6 weeks (during warm weather periods). The resulting high temperatures will kill roots and seeds below the surface of the soil.

Specialized Weeding Tools

A number of specialized weeding tools are available for removing weeds on your lawn, garden, driveways or walkways - without resorting to the use of chemicals. Check out the *Garden Equipment & Supplies - Retail* section of your SuperPages directory for local suppliers.

Some examples of tools to ask about, include:

- Propane weed torches
- Water-powered weeders
- 'No-bend' dandelion diggers



Ask your local gardening centre about which tools are best suited for the requirements of your site.

Plant Selection for General Pest Control

Select plants that are low-maintenance, but which are also suited to the conditions of your site.

Diversify your garden: Pests flourish in gardens where there is only a single type of plant. Planting a variety of plants keeps the pests from settling in your garden and reproducing. In perennial beds, grow ground cover plants beneath taller plants and shrubs to out-compete weeds.

Get pest-resistant: Buy cultivars (varieties) of your favourite plants that are resistant to pests, such as roses that are resistant to black spot, powdery mildew, and rust, grapes, squash and cucumber (seeds) that are resistant to powdery mildew, and rhododendrons that are resistant to black vine weevil.

Go native in the garden: Plant native trees, bushes, flowers and grasses that are adapted to the local environment, and require less fertilizer, pesticides and water to remain healthy. Ask your local gardening centre about native plants (including low ground covers) that are best suited for your site conditions.

Find plant companions: Plant aromatic vegetables and flowers throughout your garden to naturally repel pests. For example, marigolds (and other chrysanthemums) may protect tomatoes and beans from insects, spearmint may control aphids and ants, and garlic may control weevils and spider mites.



Advice from the BC Landscape & Nursery Association on Hiring a Professional

More and more landscape professionals have an environmental philosophy and are offering environmentally sensitive services. Look for companies whose members are designated Certified Horticultural Technicians (CHT), and remember to ask them the following five questions:



1. Do you consider the use of appropriate plant materials (i.e. hardy, disease-resistant plants that are suited to the local soil and climate)?
2. Are biological controls considered? If a pesticide is required, is the least amount used and does it have the lowest toxicity?
3. Are yard waste and trimmings composted?
4. Are water conservation techniques used (such as mulching, proper planting and efficient irrigation)?
5. Are organic-based fertilizers or soil enhancements used to improve soil quality and fertility where possible?

Preventing Environmental & Human Health Effects - 6 Steps

If you must resort to the use of pesticides to control infestations or structural pests, use the least toxic products available and only apply them in areas where they are needed most.

1. Minimize Drift: Pesticide sprays should not be allowed to drift beyond the area you are trying to treat. Do not spray on windy days and do not allow sprays to drift onto a neighbour's property. Spot sprays, to target plants only, should be used instead of broadcast sprays (which cover large areas) wherever possible.

2. Prevent Water Contamination: Leave an untreated strip or buffer zone around water including ponds, streams and wells. Pesticide sprays and runoff must not be used in a way that contaminates groundwater, ponds or nearby streams. Unwanted pesticides and spray mixtures must never be poured into household or storm drains.

3. Prevent Human Exposure: Pesticides can enter the body through the skin, eyes, nose or mouth. However, the major route of entry into the body is through the skin. Prevent exposure to pesticides by wearing protective clothing when applying, such as long-sleeved shirt, long pants, shoes and socks, unlined chemical resistant gloves.

4. Prevent Animal Poisoning: Pets and wildlife should be kept out of treated areas. Sprays should not be used on plants or areas where birds or other animals are likely to feed after treatment. Granular formulations of pesticides are particularly hazardous to birds.

5. Protect Desirable Plants: Pesticide sprays and vapours must not be allowed to drift onto desirable plants. Do not use non-selective pesticides, such as those containing glyphosate, on lawn weeds as they will also kill your lawn!

6. Protect Beneficial Insects: To protect beneficial insects, use pesticides that are the most selective, meaning that their effect is limited to a certain group of insects. Use short-lived insecticides such as those containing soaps.

For more information on safe pesticide application visit the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection website at: <http://wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/epdiv/index.html> or contact the Lower Mainland Regional Office at 604-582-5200.

Additional Resources

Burnaby 24-Hr Recorded Information Line: For information on yard care tips that will reduce your dependency on unnecessary lawn and garden chemicals phone 604-294-7089 or visit our website at: www.city.burnaby.bc.ca.

Compost Bins: To obtain a subsidized compost bin (available to all City of Burnaby residents), phone the City's Recycling Services at 604-294-7972 for further details.

Compost Hotline: For tips on how to reduce yard waste and create a successful compost pile, phone the regional compost hotline at 604-736-2250.

Inquiries: To inquire about federal pesticide regulations, phone Health Canada's Pest

Management Regulatory Agency at 1-800-267-6315 (toll-free) or visit: www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pmra-arla.

Integrated Pest Management Handbook: For a copy of the Ministry of Water, Land and Air Protection's *Integrated Pest Management Manual for Home and Garden Pests in BC*, phone 1-800-282-7955 (toll-free) to purchase a copy, or visit wlapwww.gov.bc.ca/epd/epdpa/ipmp/ipm-manuals.htm to print a free version.

Landscape and Garden Professionals: For information on hiring a Certified Horticultural Technician, phone the BC Landscape & Nursery Association at 604-574-7772, or visit: www.gardenwise.bc.ca/gardenwise/directory.lasso.

Lawn Care Tips: For more pest prevention tips for lawns, visit the Federal Healthy Lawns web site at: www.healthylawns.net.

Pesticide Product Disposal: Most products containing a poisonous (skull-and-cross bones) symbol and a Pest Control Product (PCP) number on the label, may be disposed of at the City's Recycling Depot (phone: 604-294-7972 for location and hours of operation). All empty pesticide containers may be disposed of in your regular household garbage.

Pesticide Spills: To report a pesticide spill, phone the City of Burnaby at 604-294-7200 (24-hr) and/or the BC Provincial Emergency Program at: 1-800-663-3456 (toll-free).

Poisonings: For information on potential pesticide poisonings and treatment, phone the BC Poison Control Centre. Non-emergency: 604-682-2344 local 2126. Emergency: 1-800-567-8911 (toll free) or 604-682-5050 (Lower Mainland).



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