

# Pesticides & the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Project

1209 N Calvert St  
Baltimore, MD 21202

Project co-sponsors: Maryland Pesticide Network and  
the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future

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## Organic Lawncare Checklist for Your Lawn

### **Why Organic Lawncare?**

Organic Lawncare will result in a drastic reduction or elimination of exposure to lawn pesticides for you and your family, visitors, birds and other local wildlife. And it will reduce the amount of pesticides draining into Chesapeake Bay, where pesticides are toxic to aquatic life and wildlife, and are contributing to the deterioration of the Bay watershed.

Long-term exposure to low-level concentrations of pesticides may be a chronic-disease health risk for residents of the Chesapeake Bay watershed. A growing body research suggests an association between pesticide exposures and chronic diseases such as certain cancers, as well as reproductive, neurological, respiratory and developmental disorders.

With that in mind, organic lawncare challenges the tradition of “see and spray” and provides a better and safe way to manage lawn pests. Organic Lawncare promotes non-chemical methods of pest prevention and management. It promotes and maintains soil health, and minimizes the adverse health and environmental impacts by delivering effective weed, disease, and pest control without resorting to herbicides, fungicides and insecticides.

Organic Lawn care is based on a systematic approach, with a goal of putting a series of preventive steps in place. In natural lawncare, we feed the soil in order to ensure a healthy soil that reduces/eliminates weeds and pest problems. Then, if problems do arise and a pest is not successfully managed in this way, non- chemical products are used.

**Checklist** – Organic Lawncare is based on 3 core principles: Prevention – Monitoring – Manage:

### **Prevention**

- Conserve natural enemies
- Plant improved varieties of turf
- Use good cultural practices because

### **Monitoring**

- Monitor your lawn and soil for problem pests
- Keep abreast of past and current weather conditions
- Learn common pest behavior and development (when will pests be active)
- Keep abreast of lawn history

### **Management**

- Use natural controls sparingly because overuse may have negative impacts
- Encourage beneficial pests (see table below for tips)
- Do not seek 100% control

### **Additional Turf Tips to Help Eliminate Use of Chemicals in Weed Management**

- Mow only when needed, with blades set to 3 inches.
- A single mowing should never cut more than 1/3 of grass blades, rotating the mowing pattern to reduce lawn compaction and leaving a light layer of grass clippings
- Always keep the blade sharp
- Mow in the cool part of the day
- Watering: wet the soil to the depth of the grass root zone, allowing soil to become dry before the next watering and eliminating more frequent, shorter waterings.

### **Natural Insect Resistance**

- Use endophyte (fungus) enhanced seed blend
- Plant herbs nearby

### **A few more tips...**

<b>Plant these herbs to...</b>	<b>Keep away these pests...</b>
Catnip	Flea beetle
Henbit (weed in most lawns)	Insects in general
Mint & Peppermint	Cabbage Moth
Sage	Cabbage Moth, Carrot Fly
Summer Savory	Bean Beetle
Tansy	Flying Insects, Squash Bugs, Ants
Thyme	Cabbage Worm
Rosemary Beetle	Cabbage Moth, Japanese Beetle

### **For more information on IPM lawn care, go to:**

- <http://www.rodale.com/green-lawn-care>
- [www.organiclandcare.net/publications](http://www.organiclandcare.net/publications)
- [www.beyondpesticides.org/pesticidefreelawns/resources](http://www.beyondpesticides.org/pesticidefreelawns/resources)

**The Pesticides and the Chesapeake Bay Watershed Project** was established in 2007 by the Maryland Pesticide Network and the Johns Hopkins Center for a Livable Future. The Project is the first working group in Maryland dedicated to reducing the occurrence and risks of pesticides in the Bay watershed, in order to protect water quality, aquatic life, wildlife and public health. Project participants include scientists, public health experts, waterkeepers, watermen, federal, state, and county government agency representatives, representatives of the agricultural and pest management industries and environmental organizations.

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[www.mdpestnet.org](http://www.mdpestnet.org)  
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