

## TIPS for a HEALTHY LAWN for you & for the Earth



### 1) Water deeply and infrequently.

~Don't overwater. Daily brief watering deters deep root growth essential for healthy turf grass. Excess water leaches away nutrients and encourages insects and disease.

~If you receive less than 1" of water per week and want to water, do so in the early morning to minimize evaporation and safeguard against fungus.

~Cut back on water in midsummer to let grass go dormant, strengthening it for fall and winter.

### 2) Mow Correctly

~ Mow at the highest mower setting—at least 3" or more. This encourages deep roots and will shade out some weeds. Don't mow on a schedule, but only when a cut is needed.

~Mow with sharp blades. Sharp mower blades make a clean cut, while dull ones will rip the grass, weakening your lawn's defenses.

~Leave grass clippings on the lawn as a natural fertilizer.

~During a drought, let the grass grow longer between mowings, and eliminate fertilizer.

~Consider a "mulching mower" to recycle clippings back onto the lawn.

### 3) Reseed and Top Dress Annually

~Every spring, apply a one-to-two inch thick layer of compost to top of your lawn with a spreader. Soils rich in decomposed organic materials will do a better job of holding moisture.

~Reseed with a high-quality turf-type tall fescue.

~Core-aerate the lawn to loosen up compacted soil and allow oxygen, water and nutrients in. A power aeration tool is available at rental shops. (This is a good time to reseed after aerating in spring or fall).

### 4) Fertilize Appropriately and Organically

~As well as building your soil with compost, regularly apply an organic slow-release nitrogen fertilizer with a lawn spreader. Most commercial fertilizers have too much nitrogen for your lawn and most gets washed away polluting nearby ponds and streams. Best time to fertilize: Fall, ideally September.

~Established lawns in Central Indiana need no additional phosphorus.

~Finely mulch your leaves in the fall with a mulching mower-- more good fertilizer.

### 5) Banish Weeds Naturally

~Corn gluten is an organic corn by-product that is a natural pre-emergent weed control—perfect for crabgrass. Apply early before the soil warms. Over a few seasons, you will see a difference.

~Hand-remove stubborn weeds or use Horticultural Vinegar to spot treat weeds.

~Relax your stance on weeds. It's all about attitude/perception/priorities.

### 6) Diversify Your Lawn

~Reduce your lawn. Diversify your yard to include native grasses, trees, shrubs and flowers. These enhance the value and beauty of your home and attract birds, butterflies and beneficial insects.

~Clover is a great addition to any lawn. Reintroduce it! It is drought tolerant, immune to diseases, grows low to the ground, smells lovely after it's been cut and often stays green after grass has turned brown.

~Violets add great spring color to a lawn.

~Don't be focused on a perfect lawn. A healthy lawn can naturally resist disease and drought. The more you allow nature do the work for you, the easier it will be to care for your lawn.

## RESOURCES:

Safe Lawns, [www.safelawns.org](http://www.safelawns.org)

Indiana Organic Gardener's Association, [www.gardeningnaturally.org](http://www.gardeningnaturally.org)