

10 Commandments for a Healthy Yard

Think, plan and plant around the 10 Commandments. Choosing strong native trees, shrubs, and grasses is your best defense against pests and weeds. Test your soil before planting. Adjust nutrients and pH accordingly. Post a sign designating your property a Wildlife Sanctuary.

1 Go Organic

- Just say NO or limit exposure to toxic chemicals.
- Nourish with "brown gold" (compost), slow release organic rock fertilizers or limestone.

2 Make Your Turf Tough

- Use grass varieties developed for your area.
- Use sharp blades to mow 3 to 4 inches high. Short clippings decompose fast to add nitrogen instead of thatch.
- Water deeply only when needed and aerate for dense, deep roots.

3 Go Native!

- Native plants mean less care, less time, less expense.
- The more native plants in your yard, the more healthy habitats for birds and other wildlife.
- Challenge—REDUCE LAWN AREA by 25% this season.

4 Know Your Enemies

- Get a field guide to identify insects.
- Match control to pest.
- Use control only if a high number of insects exist.
- Learn life cycles so that you do not treat unnecessarily.

5 Treat Only When Necessary

- Use nontoxic methods first.
- Pick off and dispose of insects, vacuum, prune out infestations, or hose off garden plants.

6 Pick Your Pesticides

- Not all chemicals are created equal.
- "Shotgun" killers harm beneficial insects.
- Ask your lawn-care service to list pesticides used.
- Look for EPA toxicity ratings: caution (least toxic), warning, poison (most toxic).

7 Use Biological Controls or Biopesticides

- Most have very little environmental impact.
- Most decompose quickly and affect only the target pest.

What is the Stuff on Your Shelves?

Be safe. DO AN INVENTORY NOW, before you tackle pests and weeds in your yard! Pesticides create risks for birds and other wildlife. Your CHILDREN AND PETS are exposed similarly. The more commonly used pesticides listed below carry the EPA toxicity rating of caution or warning. Why risk pesticide exposure when you can try safer alternatives?

INSECTICIDES cause death by acting on the nervous system of insects. But they also poison birds, fish, and beneficial insects. Residues are left in soil, grass, air, water, and on fruits and vegetables.

ACTIVE INGREDIENT	PRODUCT and USES	ALTERNATIVES
*Acephate	Orthene for aphids, leafminers, caterpillars, sawflies, thrips	Mail order lacewings and ladybugs for aphids. Hose down plants. Use insecticidal soaps, superior or summer oils, or yellow sticky traps.
*Bendiocarb	Ficam for mosquitoes, flies, fleas, ants, cockroaches, ticks, silverfish, snails, slugs, wasps	Use pyrethrum for flying insects, boric acid for fleas and cockroaches, parasitic nematodes for fleas, ground level plates with beer, or lettuce leaves picked up in the heat of the day for snails and slugs.
*Chlorpyrifos	Dursban, Dragon, Ortho-Klor for ants, crickets, armyworms, ticks, mites, chinch bugs, roaches, fleas, earwigs, cutworms, grasshoppers, millipedes, sowbugs, white grubs, turf weevils	Use bait stations with diflubenzuron (Siren Termite Bait) or hexaflumeron (Sentricom) for termites, bifentazate (Floramite) for spider mites, milky spore disease for Japanese beetle grubs, <i>Beauveria bassiana</i> fungus for chinch bugs, parasitic nematodes for grubs, beetles and grasshoppers.
*Diazinon	Bonide Soil Granules, Knox-Out, Real-Kill for aphids, bagworms, carpenter ants, lacebugs, scale, whiteflies, fire ants, grubs, cockroaches, fleas, termites	See Chlorpyrifos above. Use insecticidal soap for aphids, whiteflies, and mealybugs.
*Dimethoate	Cygon for caterpillars, mites, aphids, thrips, plant hoppers and whiteflies	Use superior or summer oils for mites, aphids, thrips, and whiteflies. Use <i>Bacillus thuringiensis</i> (Bt) on caterpillars (can kill beneficial insects) and pyrethrum for insects.

***ALERT!** Residential products containing any of these active ingredients are being phased-out and soon will no longer be available for purchase. Make the switch NOW to nontoxic alternatives for pest control. Dispose of unused pesticides and pesticide containers according to label instructions and local guidelines.

RODENTICIDES kill rats and mice by hindering blood clotting so that internal bleeding leads to death over several days. Brodifacoum can last more than four months and is toxic to wildlife.

ACTIVE INGREDIENT	PRODUCT and USES	ALTERNATIVES
Brodifacoum	d-CON, Talon-G for rats and mice	Rodent proof your house. Place cotton over peanut butter on traps.

HERBICIDES such as 2,4-D kill broadleaf plants. Contested studies have linked 2,4-D to cancer. It is moderately toxic to birds and highly toxic to fish and aquatic plants. GLYPHOSATE causes cell death in virtually any plant. Use carefully since toxicity varies depending on formulation and exposure.

ACTIVE INGREDIENT	PRODUCT and USES	ALTERNATIVES
Glyphosate	Roundup for killing virtually anything green	Use better mowing techniques, mulching, hand weeding
2,4-D	Scotts Turf Builder Plus 2, Weed-B-Gone for control of many broadleaf weeds	Maintain a healthy lawn by using grasses developed for your area, hand weeding, dethatching, aerating. Add native plants and reduce lawn.

8 Follow Directions and Protect Yourself

- Read labels before you buy or use a product.
- Always wear protective clothing while mixing and applying.
- Never use more than recommended. Remember—LESS IS BEST for survival of beneficial insects!
- Do not apply pesticides in windy conditions, near water sources, people, pets or wildlife habitat.
- Learn signs of pesticide poisoning.

9 Respect Your Neighbor's "Right to Know"

- Notify your neighbor before using pesticides that could drift, remain active on lawn areas, or settle in water. Children and pets are easily exposed and can take residues into homes.
- Ask neighbors and lawn services to do the same.
- Contact local municipalities to learn what, where, and when chemicals are used.
- Ask decision makers to consider safer alternatives.

10 Teach Tolerance and Be Tolerant

- Create natural yards with a variety of pests, predators, weeds, wildlife and native plant species.
- Plant bird and wildlife habitat.
- Enjoy controlled untidiness, not time-consuming lawn maintenance.
- Show by doing.
- Encourage neighbors to build continuous habitat from yard to yard.

Important Phone Numbers:

Cooperative Extension for safe disposal sites:

Poison Control Center:

Wildlife Rehabilitator:

Native plant retailer: