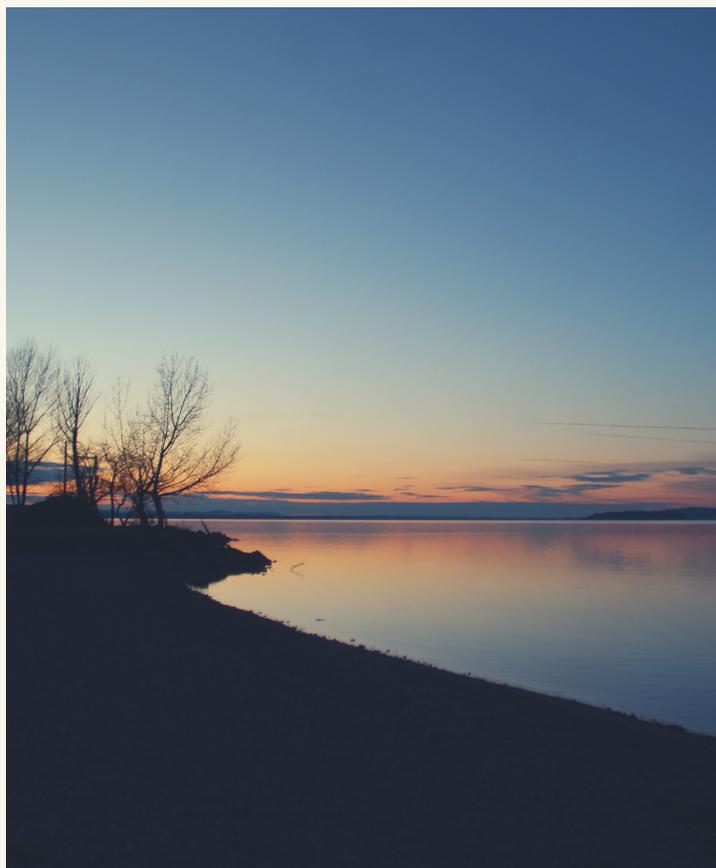
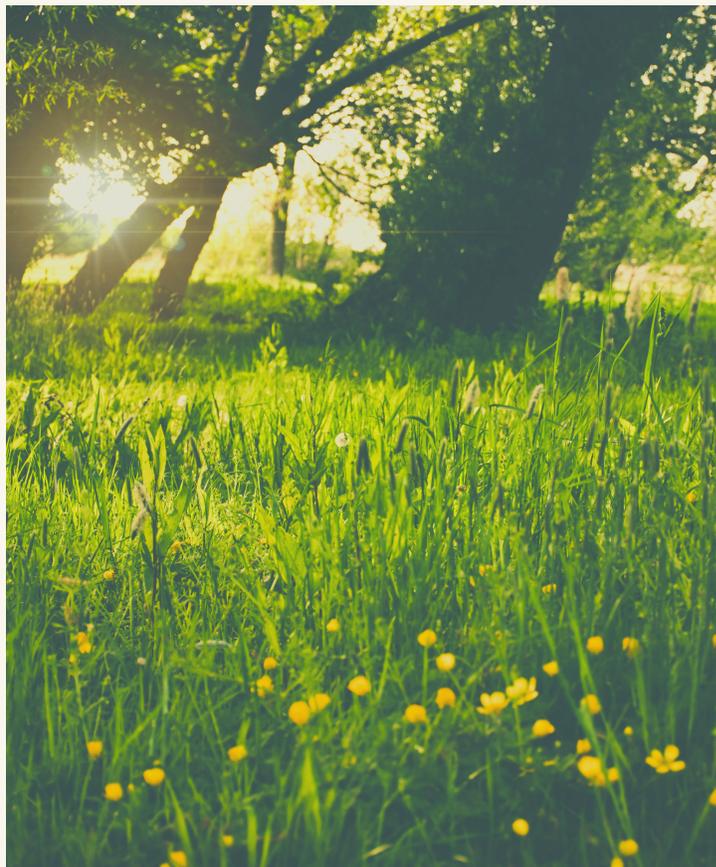


LAWN CARE FOR A HEALTHY LAKE



GENERAL GUIDLINES TO HAVE A HAPPIER LAWN AND LAKE

ASHLAND, WI



All pesticides, herbicides, and insecticides are toxic on some level. Along with killing pests and weeds, they can also harm you, your children, your pets, and any wildlife on your lawn. Young children are especially at risk from pesticides. Their bodies and immune systems are still developing. They are also more likely to spend time outside on the lawn, playing or crawling and coming in contact with any pesticides used there. It is possible to keep your lawn healthy and looking good without using pesticides. And, if you must use pesticides, you can help keep your family safe by using them with care, and only when needed.

Using Compost

Putting a layer of compost on your lawn in the fall will prepare nutrients and allow it to fully mix into your lawn before the spring thaw. Compost is very important to keeping a healthy lawn, and will encourage worms and other nutrient-digesting animals to stay on your property and keep nutrients on your property. Without worms and other animals, there is no process to break down organic materials and your grass will be deprived of the nutrients it needs to grow well.

Leave Clippings on the Lawn

When mowing, be sure to leave the clippings on the lawn. It adds organic matter and nutrients back into the soil. If you don't leave the clippings, your soil will begin to look more like "dirt" than soil. Soon it will be a form of cement that nothing will grow in and you will have the world's most pitiful lawn. Some people are concerned about "clumping" - that only happens when you mow too short or when you don't mow often enough.





Mow Higher

Keeping your lawn slightly higher (3-4") will actually prevent more weeds. First of all, the grass will have more surface area to gather sunlight, making them enjoy more nutrients and grow better, and second, have higher grass will crowd out weeds, making them struggle to gather enough sunlight to survive.

MYTH: "If I mow short, it will be longer until I have to mow again." False!

Also, counterintuitively, the longer your grass is, the less you will have to mow! Your grass needs grass blades to do photosynthesis (convert sunshine into sugar) to feed the roots. Cutting grass short will alarm the plant, making it work in overdrive to make up for the lost mass and will grow at a fast rate. This fast growth uses up a lot of the grass's stored sugar, and weakens the plant. It is now vulnerable to disease and pests! Tall grass is healthier and can use the extra sugar to make rhizomes (more grass plants) thus thickening the turf. Leaving the grass longer will allow the plant to relax knowing there is enough surface area to gather the right amount of sunlight, and it will actually grow more slowly. Only mow 1/3 of the height of the grass at a time, and mulch the grass, leaving it right on the lawn. This will provide more nutrients for your composting worms to decompose and feed back into your soil.

Weed Management

For non-selective weed management, use vinegar, herbicidal soaps, or citrus-oil based herbicides. You can also sprinkle corn gluten in spring for pre-emergent weed control.



Watering

Shallow, frequent watering encourages "thatch" (the grass propagates with above-soil runners (like strawberry runners) rather than rhizomes under the soil - there gets to be so many runners that they weave a mat that chokes out water and air). Since the roots are in the top inch or two of soil, a hot day will quickly dry the soil and much of the grass will brown. Weeds and weed seedlings love a daily watering. It's just what they need for a good start. Also, every time you water you wash away nutrients that your grass needs! Just keep your grass long (which also means longer roots) and depend on the natural water cycle!

Replace Your Lawn

Lawns take up a huge amount of resources including gas, water, time, and money. Why continue down this path when you could have a yard that is much less resource-intensive and could actually benefit you? Replacing a portion, all of your lawn with a garden will provide you and your family fresh food, and use the time and energy you put into lawn care to create something beneficial!

No Mow

There are varieties of grass that actually only require mowing once a month, or even once a season. They also require no fertilizer, and less water! Do some searching to see what would work in your lawn! Keep in mind that no-mow requires a complete do-over of your current lawn that could take some time and money, but requires much less work once it's settled.





Xeriscaping

Instead of replacing your lawn with a garden or other grass, this strategy replaces it with mulch, carefully planted landscaping and irrigation, and native, drought resistant plants. Xeriscaping is preferred in many locations around the US because of the low-maintenance, and the low use of water. It also tends to look prettier by adding variety to your yard. Make sure to consult with our local UW-Extension Agriculture specialist to get a list of truly native plants to this area, and ask about tips of how to complete this project.



Resources

- o <https://richsoil.com/lawn-care.jsp>
- o <https://www.prairienursery.com/store/no-mow-lawn>
- o <https://www.algercd.com/uploads/2/7/5/5/27558471/no-mow-fact-sheet.pdf>
- o <http://www.goingevergreen.org/no-mow-grass.html>
- o <https://www.prairienursery.com/store/seed-mixes/tall-prairie-for-medium-to-clay-soils#.W1iiMgVKjIU>
- o <https://www.highcountrygardens.com/wildflower-seeds/wildflower-seed-mix-pollinator>
- o <https://www.prairiemoon.com/tallgrass-exposed-clay-subsoil-seed-mix-prairie-moon-nursery.html>
- o <http://clean-water.uwex.edu/pubs/pdf/nativeplants.pdf>



NATURAL ORGANIC LAWN MAINTENANCE CALENDAR

Early Spring

- Mulch mow leaves still on your lawn
- Begin regular mowing when grass resumes growth. Always mow high and mulch - return grass clippings to lawn.

Spring

- Apply corn gluten meal for pre-emergent weed control in early April. Apply at a rate of 20lbs per 1000 square feet.
- Mow high - removing no more than 1/3 of growth.
- Hand-pull weeds or spot treat with herbicidal soaps.

Summer

- Hand-pull weeds or spot treat with herbicidal soaps.
- Monitor for lawn insect pests.

Late Summer

- Fertilize in September.
- Aerate and overseed with high quality seed (late August - early September).
- Corn gluten meal application for protection against winter annual weeds (only if you are not overseeding).

Fall

- Hand-pull weeds or spot treat with herbicidal soaps.
- Topdress with compost.
- Mulch fallen leaves with mower.

Late Fall

- Mulch fallen leaves with mower.
- Apply late fall fertilizer.

