

# 10 TIPS FOR AN ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY YARD

## 1. GO GREEN WITH YOUR LAWN

A super-green, lush carpet of grass that's the envy of your neighbors might sound appealing at first thought. But in reality, maintaining such a lawn can cause immense water quality problems.

Fertilizers and pesticides applied in excess are washed into rivers, streams, and wetlands, so limiting their use can make a big difference. Even better, convert manicured lawns to natural meadows, beds of native perennials, shrubs, or forest. Here are three quick tips for a great, green lawn:

- (1) **Kill Insects with Kindness** - Or at least keep them away with natural deterrents. A list of non-chemical, natural insect repellents is available at: [www.eartheasy.com/live\\_natpest\\_control.htm](http://www.eartheasy.com/live_natpest_control.htm).
- (2) **Fight Weeds with Eco-Friendly Herbicides** - Try Deadeye (a vinegar-based formula) and WOW (nitrogen fertilizer) made from corn gluten. You can also pour boiling water or white vinegar on smaller weeds, like the ones that grow in walkway cracks.
- (3) **Go Native** - When landscaping your property, use native species (plants indigenous to Massachusetts) whenever possible. They require less water than grass because they have deeper roots that can store more water. Also, many native species provide food and cover for local wildlife, creating a sanctuary in the midst of suburban sprawl. For more information, see: [www.greenscapes.org](http://www.greenscapes.org) and <https://www.grownativemass.org/about/welcome>.



## 2. DON'T LET THOSE CREATURES GO (*info about invasive animals and plants*)

Although exotic animals can make great pets, and ornamental plants may be beautiful, many of these species are considered "invasive." In fact, some of the characteristics that make these species desirable (such as their hardiness and rapid growth) also allow them to out-compete native plants and animals in the wild. So, how can you help prevent the spread of invasives?

**Never release aquarium pets or bait into any stream or wetland.** And please keep only native plants and animals in your water gardens, since predators such as great blue herons often carry water-garden residents to natural habitats. For information, please see: <https://massnrc.org/pests/about.htm>.

## 3. PLANT A RAIN GARDEN

Locate a rain garden in a natural low spot where it can intercept runoff from streets, driveways, roofs and walkways. Keep it at least 15 feet away from building foundations. For more information, please visit: [www.raingardennetwork.com](http://www.raingardennetwork.com).

## 4. COMPOST YARD WASTE

A lot of people think that since grass clippings, brush, and other yard wastes are "natural," it is okay to dump huge piles of them in the woods or in wetlands.

Dumped yard waste actually destroys underlying vegetation and wildlife habitat, and prevents new trees and shrubs from growing. Dumped leaves or yard waste near water bodies will often cause water pollution or flooding problems upstream. Roadside ditches, created to store roadway runoff and prevent water pollution, can clog when residents or landscapers dump leaves into them.

Foxborough residents are encouraged to bring their yard waste (including grass, leaves, and brush) to the Town's Compost Site on East Belcher Road during normal business hours ([http://www.foxboroughma.gov/Pages/FoxboroughMA\\_Leaf/index](http://www.foxboroughma.gov/Pages/FoxboroughMA_Leaf/index)).

## 5. SCOOP THE POOP

It's a dirty job, but if you don't do it, you're directly contributing to local water quality problems. Pet waste contains parasites that can cause human (and pet) health problems and can be harmful to our wetlands and streams. Please pick up after your pet and never throw pet waste into a storm drain or waterway.



## 6. DON'T BE A DRIP

Oil, gasoline, and antifreeze from cars, trucks, lawnmowers, and boats are highly toxic to wildlife. If you notice a leak, please fix it immediately to keep these toxins from polluting our waterways.

## 7. DRAIN SWIMMING POOLS WISELY

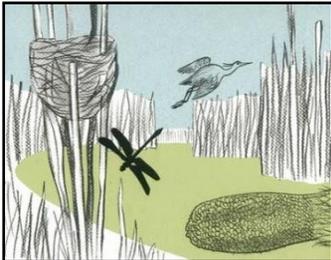
Never drain a pool or a hot tub directly into a body of water. The best option is to discharge chlorinated water over landscaped areas, following these steps:

- (1) Shut off the chlorination system or stop adding chlorine one week before draining pool water;
- (2) Make sure that the pH level is between 6.5 and 8.5, the normal pH range of surface and ground waters; and
- (3) Drain pool or hot tub water into an area that will not flow directly into a street, gutter, wetland, pond, lake, stream or your neighbor's property.

## 8. DEADWOOD IS GOOD WOOD

Deadwood is an essential component of forests and wetlands. It provides habitat for a myriad of organisms. Forest health revolves completely around decomposing wood and leaves. Whether a standing oak riddled with woodpecker holes or a fallen willow that has created a snag in a small brook, deadwood fosters forest life. Please think twice before you "clean up" or clear cut your forest.

## 9. PROTECT WETLANDS BY PLANTING A VEGETATIVE BARRIER AROUND THEM



If you live on the banks of a stream or next to a wetland, pond or lake, a vegetative buffer is critically important to preventing storm water runoff from washing pollution (fertilizers, herbicides, pet wastes, petroleum products, etc.) directly into these waters.

Planting or maintaining a native vegetative buffer zone will help maintain water quality, recreational resources, wildlife habitat, and property value.

For more information, please visit the conservation commission's website at <http://www.foxboroughma.gov/conservation>, specifically the "Landscaping with Natives Plants" link.

## 10. WETLANDS ARE WONDERFUL

Wetlands are valuable because they protect drinking water, prevent storm damage, reduce flooding, provide wildlife habitat, and filter polluted water. Yet some wetlands may not look wet all the time; low areas that flood may be wetlands. A wide variety of wetlands (including swamps, rivers and ponds) are protected by the Massachusetts Wetlands Protection Act and Foxborough Wetlands Protection Bylaw.

Many Foxborough properties contain wetlands that are protected by state or local wetland regulations, so your property may, too. Always contact the conservation commission (508-543-1251) or conservation agent before you consider working near wetlands or waterways.

