



SPRING



Turf Matters

A LITTLE YARD CAN GO A LONG WAY

If your landscape space is limited, there are many ways to make it attractive and enjoyable...all it takes is a little imagination! Here are some tips for making the most of small spaces:

- **Focal points** make small spaces more attractive. Consider a small pond, sculpture, fountain or bird bath.
- **Curved garden areas** look bigger than square or rectangular ones.
- **Flower pots** raise plants off the ground, adding a sense of depth to the landscape. Plus, pots can be moved around throughout the growing season to refresh the look of your outdoor space.
- **Cool colors** such as blue and green can make a garden look bigger than it really is.
- **Raised flower beds** with multiple layers of plantings will provide extra design and color options.

With a little creativity and planning, even the smallest of yards can have a big impact!

“Just Say No” to Broadleaf Weeds CONTROL THEM WITH REGULAR MAINTENANCE AND POST-EMERGENTS

We'd all like to have a thick carpet of beautiful, green grass without a weed in sight, but the reality of the situation is that broadleaf weeds are very determined pests. No lawn is immune to them, their seeds are always present in the soil, and they germinate throughout the growing season.

Dandelions are probably the most familiar to you, but others such as chickweed, ground ivy, henbit, knotweed, plantain and thistle can all make an appearance in your turf when you least expect it.

Broadleaf weeds have trouble growing in dense, healthy lawns. Therefore, the first step in “Saying No” to them is to develop a hearty stand of grass through ongoing care and maintenance. This should include regular fertilization, insect and disease control as necessary, adequate irrigation in the absence of rainfall (1" to 1½" per week), and proper mowing (removing no more than 1/3 of the grass blade at a time).

WHAT IF THAT'S NOT ENOUGH?

Despite your best efforts to maintain a beautiful lawn, broadleaf weeds can still show up in your turf from time to time. When this happens, they need to be treated with a post-emergent herbicide. Post-emergents must be used when the weeds are actively growing (many broadleaf weeds can't be treated with pre-emergents like those used to prevent crabgrass seeds from sprouting).

Once applied, it can take up to three weeks for the weeds to die off completely. Repeated applications may also be necessary, since broadleaf weed seeds germinate continuously.

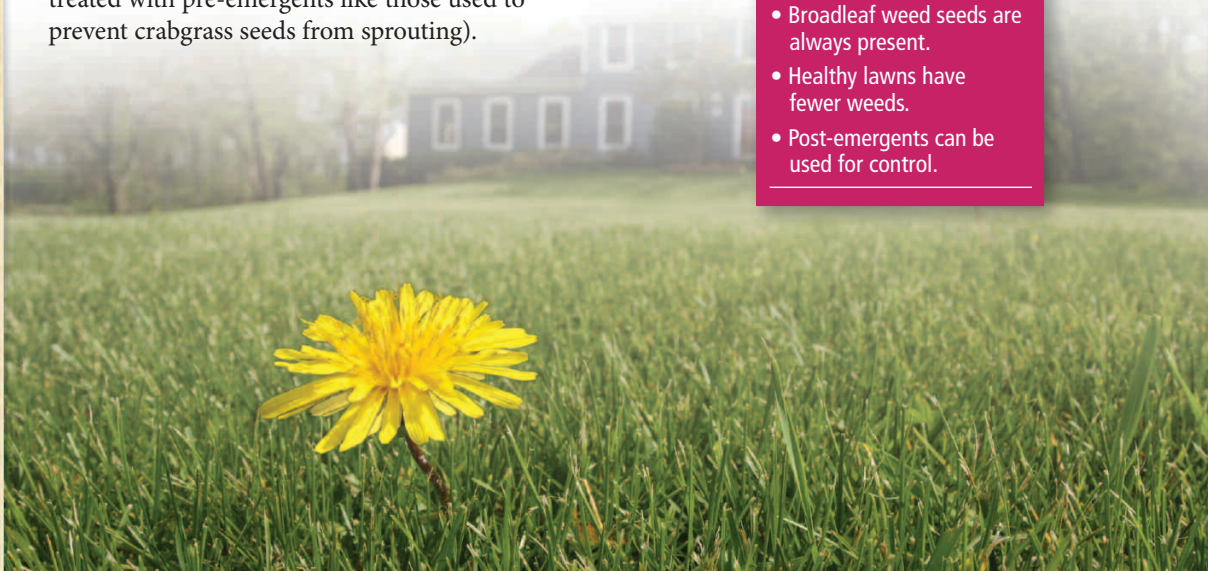
Remember, when it comes to broadleaf weeds, don't concede. It's easy to “Say No” to these annoying pests with good lawn care practices and post-emergents.



Thistle is just one of many broadleaf weeds that may invade your lawn.

REMEMBER...

- Broadleaf weed seeds are always present.
- Healthy lawns have fewer weeds.
- Post-emergents can be used for control.



MAKING YOUR Best Impression

If you're thinking about selling your home in the near future, keep in mind that curb appeal can make or break the deal. The majority of potential buyers will decide whether or not they want to look inside your house based on what they see when they drive by.

So put yourself in their shoes. Position yourself where you can get a good look at your house and its surroundings, and take note of anything that may be detracting from your property's curb appeal.

Is your lawn mowed with no visible weeds? Have leaves been raked and removed? Are any tree limbs near or touching your home's roof? Are overgrown trees or shrubs blocking a striking architectural feature from view? You might be surprised at what a difference a little lawn maintenance and pruning can make.

And don't forget that potential buyers may drive by your home during the evening. With low-voltage lights that illuminate your driveway, walks and landscape plantings, you can improve your property's nighttime curb appeal dramatically!



Curb appeal plays an important role in the process of selling your home.

Choices, Choices, Choices

WHICH MOWER IS RIGHT FOR YOU?

In the market for a new lawn mower? If so, there are a whole lot of options, and knowing exactly what you want before you start looking can make the decision easier. Prior to making a purchase, it's important to ask the following questions:

How big is your yard? If your lawn area is more than an acre in size, you may want to consider a riding mower. Wide decks enable these workhorses to cut more grass in less time, with less effort expended on your part. However, a riding mower may not be practical if you have less than an acre to mow, or if you have lots of tough angles and tight spaces that need cutting.

Do you want a recycling mower? These mowers keep the grass clippings underneath the mower deck long enough to chop them into fine pieces for easier breakdown in your lawn. They're a great tool for reducing the amount of yard waste we send to our landfills, and they can help to provide your lawn with valuable nutrients.

What kind of flexibility does the mower offer? Adjustable cutting heights are a must, since different lawn types do better at different lengths. You'll also want to be able to adjust your mowing height according to the seasons (higher in the hotter months, lower in the cooler months).

How efficient is the mower? If you're looking for a walk-behind model, the bigger the cutting width, the better. After all, you want to spend more time enjoying your yard than you do mowing it.

What are the safety features? At a minimum, you want the blades to be covered by a strong steel deck. Steel discharge ports and engine shrouds are also preferable. Your safety, as well as that of anybody else using the mower, are worth the added cost.

Good luck in your search!



A walk-behind mower is a good choice for lawns less than an acre in size.

M U L C H

A VALUABLE ADDITION

The aesthetic benefits that mulch brings to your landscape are obvious. But have you ever wondered what purposes it serves beyond beautification? In addition to improving the looks of your property, mulching is one of the best ways to protect and improve the health of your landscape plants.

Applied properly, mulch benefits both plants and soil in the following ways:

- It helps to retain soil moisture
- It reduces weed growth
- It maintains a more even soil temperature throughout the year
- It helps to prevent soil erosion
- It prevents crusting of soil surfaces to improve water absorption
- It protects tree and shrub trunks from lawn equipment damage
- It encourages the expansion of root systems

That's a lot of benefits! But to make sure mulch is able to do its job, it's important to apply it correctly.

Treat Your Lawn to a Little “PHC”

HELPING YOUR TURF TO HELP ITSELF

Prevention plays a very important part in the maintenance of your lawn. And one of the best ways to maintain your lawn's health is to practice Plant Health Care, or PHC. This concept represents a proactive approach to lawn management, rather than a strictly reactive one.

The idea behind PHC is simple. Your lawn can protect itself by using its own natural defense mechanisms, but first it needs to be in a healthy, stable condition. In order to

get and keep turf healthy, certain practices should be followed throughout the year.

Watering: Your lawn needs from 1" to 1½" per week from rainfall or sprinkling, and the soil should be soaked to a depth of 6" when using a sprinkler.

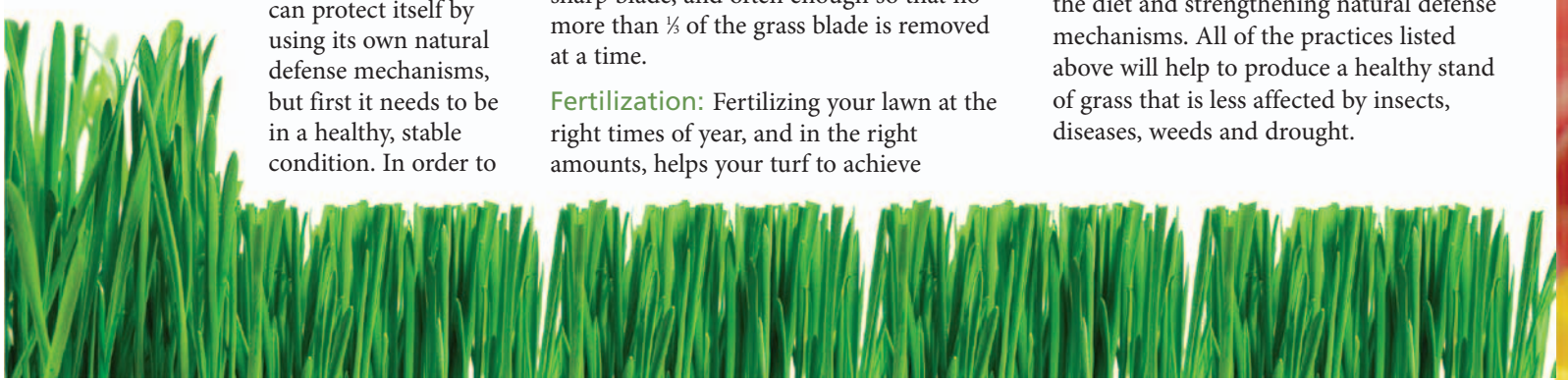
Mowing: You should always mow with a sharp blade, and often enough so that no more than ⅓ of the grass blade is removed at a time.

Fertilization: Fertilizing your lawn at the right times of year, and in the right amounts, helps your turf to achieve

balanced, healthy growth.

Aeration: Core aeration prevents thatch build-up, improves the soil, and makes it easier for air, water and nutrients to reach the root system.

Plant Health Care works just like human health care...by relieving stress, improving the diet and strengthening natural defense mechanisms. All of the practices listed above will help to produce a healthy stand of grass that is less affected by insects, diseases, weeds and drought.



MATTERS

TO ANY LANDSCAPE

Plan Ahead to Minimize Construction Damage

If you'll be having construction done on your property anytime soon, it's wise to develop a tree protection plan before construction begins. To create a successful plan, we recommend the following steps:

Inventory your trees. Take a walk around your property and note the location, size and health of each tree. Select which trees you'd like to save. If it appears that a tree's root system will most likely be damaged by construction activities, you should consider changing the original design, taking protective measures or having the tree removed before construction starts.

Protect the trees you want to save. Post "off-limits" signs near the trees to be saved and surround them with fencing (orange polypropylene works well). Construction workers need to be alerted that the area inside the fencing shouldn't be disturbed.

Prepare your trees. Ensuring that your trees are as healthy as possible will boost their chances of surviving the construction process. You should water them regularly in the absence of rainfall, and regular fertilization will help to strengthen their root systems. In addition, branches that are dead, diseased, hazardous or detrimental to the plant's natural form should be removed.

The trees on your property are valuable investments. If they're properly protected before construction begins, they'll help to increase your property value with each passing year!

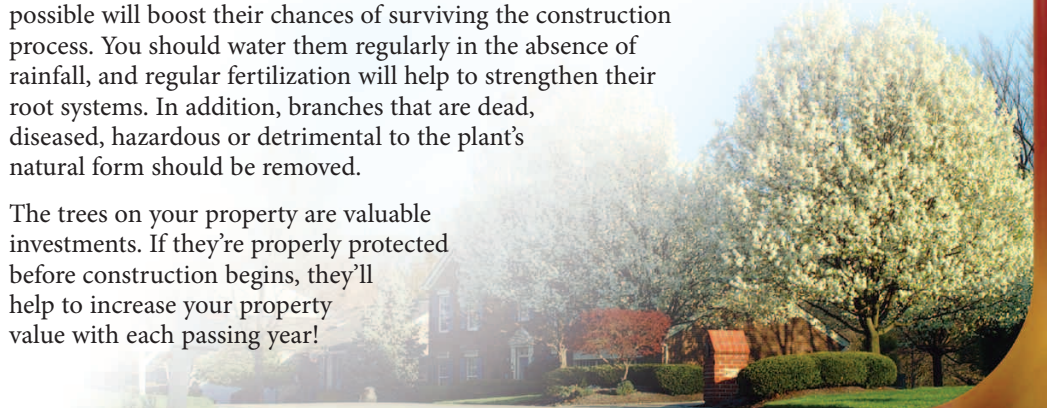
REMEMBER...

- Decide which trees you want to save and make sure they're clearly marked.
- The healthier the tree, the less stressful the construction process will be.



Mulch should be applied to new plants as soon as they're installed. For established plantings, spring is the best time for application. Care should be taken not to pile mulch up against trunks and stems, and it should be applied at least 6" to 12" beyond the drip line of the tree or shrub. The finished mulch bed should be no more than 4" deep.

For a great-looking landscape and healthier, more beautiful trees and shrubs, mulch is marvelous!





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Can Do For You!

If you know any homeowners who can benefit from the use of our services, have them give us a call at (203) 865-0300 (Greater New Haven) or (860) 528-4440 (Greater Hartford). All they have to do is mention your name. For each referral you send us who signs up for our Full Program, you'll receive \$20 off your next service to show our gratitude!

This program applies to new clients only, and Referral Fees may not exceed the price per service. New clients must receive our Full Lawn Program to qualify for referral discount.

Growing Your Own Herbs



Why buy herbs when you can grow them yourself?

When you think about it, eating wouldn't be very much fun if we didn't have herbs. Without them, some of our favorite recipes would be very lacking in flavor and character!

Growing your own culinary herbs from seed is easy to do and requires very little space. The seeds can be grown indoors or out, and they do best when planted in well-drained, fertile soil with a neutral pH of 6.5 to 7.0. It's important not to plant the seeds too deep, and the top surface of the soil should be kept moist. Once seedlings appear, they should be thinned according to the instructions on the seed packet.

It's best to harvest your herbs in the morning when their oil concentrations are high. They should be washed in cool water after harvesting, and will then be ready for use if your recipe calls for fresh herbs. Or, if you'd like to dry them, you can spread them out on a drying rack. With good ventilation, your herbs should be dried and ready within three days.

Some of the more popular choices for home growing include parsley, sage, chives, thyme, savory, marjoram, mint and basil. Of course, many other varieties are available...it all depends on your own personal taste!



CUT COSTS WITH A CUTTING GARDEN!

Cutting gardens allow you to beautify your landscape while maintaining your own free supply of flowers for indoor bouquets. The first step is to choose the flowers you want to grow.

Depending on your personal preferences, you may want to choose from the following:

Annuals: Geraniums, Petunias, Snapdragons, Sweet Peas, Zinnias

Perennials: Asters, Baby's Breath, Black-Eyed Susans, Chrysanthemums, Delphinium

For best results, you should turn the soil and add organic matter (humus, compost) before planting. Regular watering and four to six hours of sunlight each day will also be necessary. And to prevent deer, rabbits, chipmunks and other critters from feeding on your flowers, you may need to install a barrier made of mesh or netting around your cutting garden.

Follow these tips, and you'll be creating your own beautiful bouquets in no time!