


Health Care

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ROBERT H. CRANFIELD D.C.

It's not easy being green

Steps for a healthy lawn using natural methods

As public concern about pesticides increases, many residents are faced with the dilemma of choosing an appropriate lawn care professional. Homeowners in particular are becoming more concerned about the effects the products they put on their lawns have on the environment and their personal health.

More and more lawn care companies are advertising their products and services as organic or environmentally friendly. The challenge is to know how to choose a company to care for your lawn that meets your needs and addresses your concerns. The following questions may help you to gain a better understanding of a company's practices and ethics. Answers to these questions can be found on the Health Department Web site at www.region.halton.on.ca/health.


- Do you have a pesticide-free lawn care program?
- How will your programs contribute to healthy soil?
- Do you assess a lawn for problems before applying pesticides?
- What types of pesticide alternatives do you use?
- What types of fertilizers do you use?
- Do you provide advice about ongoing lawn maintenance?

If you ask these questions to lawn care companies, and do not get the answers you're looking for, try another company.

It is also important to read the fine print, and ask the company for a full

explanation of any words or statements that you do not understand. Reliable companies will welcome questions and provide honest answers.

If you decide to care for your lawn without the services of a local company, there are many things you can do on your own to grow a

HEALTH NOTES

healthy lawn — without using pesticides.

Some simple steps include hand pulling weeds, and over-seeding, particularly on the thin patches in the spring or fall. Also keeping your lawn mower set high to cut your lawn to a height of 3 inches (7.5 cm) and watering your lawn one inch (2.5 cm) every 7-10 days will help to keep your grass healthy and choke out weeds. It is also helpful to leave grass clippings on the lawn (as a

- *Keep your lawn mower set high to keep grass at three inches*
- *Water your lawn one inch every seven to 10 days*
- *Leave grass clippings on the lawn*
- *Hand pull weeds*
- *Over-seed with grass seed*
- *Try alternative grass covers*

natural mulch); this decreases weeds and provides 30% of fertilizer needs while helping to keep the soil cool and moist. Consider trying something different, like alternatives to grass, such as shrubs,

vines, perennials and ground covers. Some native plants, including wild flowers, may be suitable for your yard.

Partners for Naturally Green

The Health Department, along with representatives from the City of Burlington, the Towns of Halton Hills, Milton, and Oakville, have joined forces to create Partners for Naturally Green. This group is dedicated to increasing awareness in the community, particularly with homeowners, about how to achieve a healthy lawn and garden using natural methods instead of pesticides.

The Partners will be running a Pesticide Exchange week, Monday, May 31 through Saturday, June 5, from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Halton's Waste Management Site (5400 Reg. Rd. 25, Milton), where residents are encouraged to turn in their old or unused pesticides in exchange for a free pesticide reduction action kit, and a chance to win many prizes.

Pesticides can also be turned in on Environment Day, Sat. June 12, 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at Sheridan College in Oakville.

For more information on the Naturally Green education campaign or how to grow a healthy lawn, visit www.region.halton.on.ca or call 905-825-6000, TTY 905-827-9833. For turf related questions, contact your area municipality: Burlington 905-333-6172, Halton Hills 905-873-2601, Milton 905-878-7211, and Oakville 905-845-6601.

Health Notes is prepared by staff of the Halton Region Health Department



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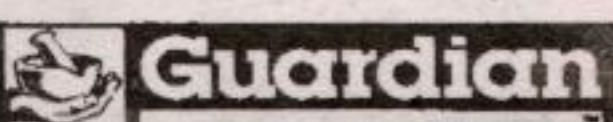
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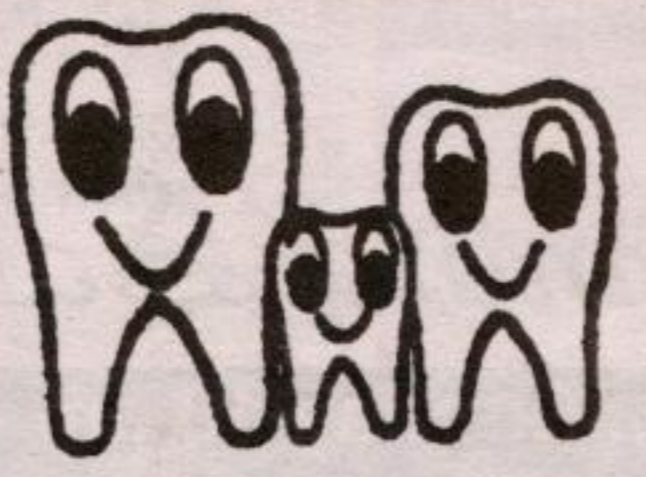
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