

Weeds, weeds go away

(NC)—As summer starts to come to an end, the weeds in your lawn are getting ready to make an appearance one last time for the season. Stop them in their tracks by making their home an inhospitable one. An ounce of prevention in early fall will go a long way this season and well into next spring.

Regular feedings of lawn fertilizer throughout the growing season help to create a thick, healthy lawn. A thick lawn crowds out weeds, reducing their chances of establishing a foothold in your turf. "Another great preventative measure comes from applying corn gluten to your lawn," says Glenn Martin, senior marketing manager of healthy lawns and sustainability at Scotts Canada. Corn gluten has pre-emergent herbicidal properties. That means that if applied prior to weeds appearing in your lawn, the corn gluten will prevent weed seeds from germinating. There are a number of corn gluten products on the market today. According to Martin, the key is

to look for products that are marked as 100% corn gluten and that are in pelletized (not ground) form, such as Scotts TurfBuilder with Weed Prevent, so they can be easily applied to your lawn with a spreader.

Corn gluten prevents the germination of dandelion and large crabgrass seeds by releasing amino/dipeptides (proteins) into the soil, starving the roots of water. Apply when the soil is moist and when rain is forecasted within two days of application. Remember, corn gluten won't eliminate the weeds you already have but will prevent new ones from sprouting. It also stops grass seeds from germinating, so never overseed your lawn and apply corn gluten at the same time. Corn gluten is a great way to keep ahead of your weeds before they become a problem.

More tips on creating and maintaining a healthy lawn can be found online at www.scotts.ca.

What does the EnerGuide label really mean?

(NC)—Natural Resources Canada (NRCAN) provides an energy efficiency rating tool for houses that could be used on all new houses built in Canada under its EnerGuide Rating System (ERS). The ERS label lets you know how your home stacks up in terms of energy performance. It shows you, and future buyers, exactly how energy-efficient your home is. So how does the EnerGuide Rating System work? Your home's energy efficiency level is rated on a scale of 0 to 100. A rating of 0 represents a home with major air leakage, no insulation and extremely high energy consumption. A rating of 100 represents a house that is airtight, well-insulated, sufficiently ventilated and requires no purchased energy. For a brand new house, a rating of 80 or higher is excellent.

The rating takes into account several factors including your building plans and building materials. An energy advisor evaluates each house and inputs all of the information he or she has gathered into a modeling software program developed by NRCAN to provide the rating for your home. Once your home is completed and the advisor has performed the final evaluation, the advisor ensures that you receive an EnerGuide rating label for your home. The label tells you the rating of your home and estimates of future annual energy consumption.

The EnerGuide rating label is a one-stop shop approach to knowing exactly how energy-efficient your home is. Remember, a higher EnerGuide rating means a more energy-efficient home. Energy-efficient homes are more comfortable to live in because they usually have improved indoor air quality, ventilation and heating systems. When a home is energy-efficient, the reduced energy use translates into lower energy bills. Energy-efficient homes require less energy which helps reduce greenhouse gas emissions that contribute to climate change and protect our environment for future generations.

The new home market in Canada is exploding with builders who want to become licensed as builders of EnerGuide-rated homes and buyers who want their services. It seems to be a win-win situation for everyone. If you are planning to build or buy a new home in the coming months, spend some time on the NRCAN website at www.newhomes.nrcan.gc.ca.

- News Canada

Five things kids can do this summer to go green

(NC)—Video games, road trips, roller coasters and go-karting are all fun summer activities, but what if you could have summer fun and do your part for a cleaner, greener planet at the same time?

You can help your child discover unforgettable summer activities that make a real difference. Why not try the following:

1. Eco-Travel: Instead of taking a road trip, reduce carbon emissions by going for a hike or a long bike ride.
2. Go Local: Picking berries and fruit is fun and an opportunity to learn how food gets from a farmer to the table. Use the fruit or vegetables to make a special snack.

3. Animal Fun: Visit the zoo and learn about endangered species and the small changes we can make to help save them.

4. Get involved: Start an eco-club with neighbourhood kids, start an anti-idling campaign in your community or apply to be a member of the Sunlight Green Clean Kids.

5. Get Crafty: Recycling is a kid-friendly concept that stretches the imagination. Use old clothes and cardboard boxes to create green costumes and a headquarters for your neighbourhood eco-club.

More information is available online at www.SunlightGreenCleanKids.ca.

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