Many of the most popular lawn fertilizers sold and used on Long Island contain high levels of water-soluble nitrogen (above 12%). Some utilize “biosolids” – a cheap source of nitrogen that comes from wastewater treatment plants, or pellets made with PFAS. **These fertilizers are contaminating our ground and surface waters**.

Slow release, low-nitrogen fertilizers are much healthier for your grass, and won't contaminate our water. They're available at all big box stores and garden centers, and you'll need less of them to safely feed your lawn.

So why not join the growing number of Long Island families that are choosing to practice responsible lawn care with products that won't contaminate our water?

For more information please visit www.LIWater.org.

LIWater.org

Thank you, from your friends and neighbors working to protect Long Island’s water:

Citizens Campaign for the Environment
Concerned Citizens of Montauk,
CRESLI
Defend H2O
Friends of the Long Pond Greenbelt
Food & Water Watch
Grassroots Environmental Education
Group for the East End
Peconic Baykeeper
The Perfect Earth Project
North Fork Environmental Council, North Shore Audubon
The Open Space Council
Operation Splash
The Pine Barrens Society
Save the Great South Bay
Seatuck Environmental Center
Setauket Harbor Task Force
Sierra Club Long Island.

Keeping our lawns green, our water clean and our kids and pets safe!

The Long Island Lawn Care Guide

Long Island is a fragile ecosystem and sole source underground aquifers provide our drinking water. Whatever we put on our lawns eventually ends up in our aquifers or runs off into surrounding surface waters.

We need to care for our lawns with this in mind!

Here on Long Island, taking care of our lawns safely is protecting our water.

Using low-nitrogen fertilizers and avoiding PFAS chemicals helps protect our fragile ground and surface waters.

• **Avoid Water-Soluble High-Nitrogen Fertilizers.** Nitrogen is the enemy of clean water. Water soluble high-nitrogen fertilizers leach into our ground and surface waters with rainfall and irrigation, causing dangerous algal blooms and fish kills. Do not apply (and do not permit your lawn service to apply) any lawn fertilizer product with more than 12% nitrogen. That's the first of the three numbers on the fertilizer bag. And check the label to be sure that at least 50% of the nitrogen is **water insoluble**, or "**slow release**."

• **Avoid Fertilizers with PFAS.** Many lawn fertilizers use biosolids, solid waste from wastewater treatment plants, as a source of nitrogen. These have been found to contain high levels of highly toxic chemicals known as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS, as well as other household and industrial waste products. Some fertilizers also contain PFAS from the manufacturing process.

• **Avoid Using Chemical Pesticides.** Pesticides used for lawns and landscapes include herbicides, insecticides and fungicides. While pesticides may be initially effective, pests will eventually develop resistance and then require even more toxic formulations. And because most pesticides are broad-spectrum, they kill many non-target organisms, including beneficial insect species and soil microorganisms.

Follow these steps for a beautiful non-toxic lawn

1. **Overseed** – A thick turf is the best way to control weeds. Seed in late summer or early fall with a mixture of indigenous grasses. Core or slice aeration before seeding will improve germination and help alleviate compaction. A bucket of compost mixed with grass seed is the best solution for filling in bare spots.

2. **Mow High** – Cut grass at 3 to 3 1/2 inches, allowing it to shade its roots, conserve moisture and prevent weeds from germinating. Keep mower blades sharp so they don't tear the grass, making it vulnerable to disease. And leave grass clippings (a free source of nitrogen) on the lawn to reduce the need for commercial fertilizer.

3. **Water Less, But Longer** – Once-a-week watering in the early morning for several hours is the best method, subject to any water restrictions in your area. Take into consideration rainfall and the type of soil you have. Sandy soils like those on Long Island generally need more water than clay-based soils, but too much water can cause fungal problems to develop.

4. **Use Natural Weed Control** – If you really don't like dandelions, dig them out! You can also use an organic corn gluten product that prevents crab grass and other broadleaf weed seeds from germinating. It must be applied to established (not newly seeded) lawns early in the spring. For spot weed control on driveways and walkways, use a vinegar or vinegar/botanical oil combination product. Iron-based weed control products are also effective for lawns.

5. **Control Pests Naturally** – Common pests (grubs, sod webworms, chinch bugs) can be controlled with applications of beneficial nematodes. Milky spore powder is another effective control for Japanese beetle grubs. Most fungal diseases can be prevented with several light applications of compost or liquid compost tea. Beneficial organisms in healthy soil will out-compete unwanted pests.

For a complete listing of lawn fertilizers that help protect our water, please visit www.LIWater.org