

The environmental benefits of healthy lawns

Across America, nearly 20 million acres of lawns provide a soft landing for kids at play, a blanket for families to picnic and a cushion for bare feet to roam. Yet the greatest benefit of healthy grass – what it means to the environment – is nearly always overlooked. Indeed, turf is about much more than aesthetics. For most of suburban America, it's the foundation of the neighborhood's ecosystem.

Most homeowners don't realize noise and air pollution are reduced in most suburban areas because the grass ecosystem serves as a natural filter for the environment. Scientists at leading universities have found a healthy lawn provides the following environmental benefits:



Cooling the Environment: Lawns provide a substantial cooling effect to the environment. Eight average-sized lawns will have the cooling effect of 70 tons of air conditioning compared to the average 4-ton home air conditioner. Summer air temperatures above a lawn will be up to 30° cooler than above a paved area.

Better Air Quality: Lawns convert the greenhouse gas, carbon dioxide, into oxygen. The lawn outside of your home can provide most of the oxygen you breathe. In fact a 50-foot by 50-foot area of turf will provide enough oxygen for a family of four, day after day.

A Natural Air Cleaner: Grasses in the U.S. trap an estimated 12 million tons of dust and dirt annually from the air. An acre of grass will absorb hundreds of pounds of sulfur dioxide per year. The haze created by these pollutants can reduce the sunlight by as much 15%.

Stabilizing the Earth: Lawns knit the soil together with their roots and stems to prevent erosion that is typically caused by rainfall run-off on bare ground. Water run-off from lawns is also rare because the average 10,000 square-foot lawn can absorb more than 6,000 gallons of water from a rainfall event.

This guide is designed to help homeowners enjoy green and healthy turf, while also being good stewards of the environment.

Dedicated to a beautiful world



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The Scotts Company is a proud sponsor of Keep America Beautiful® and its Great American Cleanup™. Each spring, Keep America Beautiful – the nation's largest volunteer-based community improvement and education organization – engages millions of volunteers in more than 15,000 communities in programs in all 50 states that beautify and improve community environments.

As part of our commitment, Scotts is sponsoring "community showcase gardens" in several cities. We're also providing lawn care and gardening tips to communities throughout America. We want to help you enjoy the benefits of beautiful lawns and gardens, while helping you do your part to enhance our environment and keep America beautiful.

As the world's largest supplier of lawn care products, Scotts is equally committed to developing products and packaging that are beneficial to the environment and that consumers can use with confidence. Join Scotts and Keep America Beautiful® in our dedication to a beautiful world. By following these tips, you can be an environmental steward in your own yard or garden.

Green lawns and a healthy environment



Homeowner's tips for maintaining a beautiful lawn and environment



10 tips

for creating a beautiful lawn and a healthy environment

There are many benefits associated with a healthy lawn, and it's easier than many people realize to enjoy them, while also being a good steward of the environment. Homeowners can have a healthy and beautiful lawn by following these tips.

1 Always read the label.
It's important to use lawn and garden products the right way by following label instructions. You get the best results by following the directions, and it's the safest for you, your children, pets and the environment.

2 Protect our water.
Apply fertilizer only to the lawn for the best protection of the environment. If fertilizer lands on any hard surface such as a driveway, sidewalk or road, sweep the fertilizer back onto the lawn to keep it from being washed into the storm sewers and ultimately surface waters.

3 Mow your lawn high to develop deep roots.
A mowing height of 3" allows the grass to have plenty of green leaves to foster a deep root system. The most effective use of rainfall and irrigation occurs when lawns have a deep root system to reach more soil moisture and nutrients. This is a key step for water conservation.

4 Feed your lawn regularly.
Regular feeding makes your lawn healthy, thick and green all season long. When combined with proper mowing, thick lawns crowd out weeds. Healthy lawns are better able to tolerate insects, drought, heat and other stresses.



5 Use the right amount.
Products are designed to do the best job when used as directed. In general, overapplication will not improve product performance. However, it can potentially harm your lawn and the environment.

6 Leave the grass clippings on your lawn.
Leaving grass clippings on your lawn recycles plant nutrients back into the soil. Clippings contain the same beneficial nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium nutrients as fertilizer. In fact, clippings can provide up to one-third of the annual feeding requirement for your lawn.

7 When to control lawn pests.
Weeds, insects and diseases can harm the beauty of your lawn. Identify the lawn problem first, then decide if the problem is bad enough to need a cure. Some recurring problems like crabgrass or grubs are best managed with preventive applications. Use the right method of treatment for the problem.

8 How to control lawn pests.
When dealing with lawn weeds and insects, consider spot treatment first with a ready-to-use product. It's quick, easy and effective for small, localized problems such as a few dandelions. When weeds or insects are found throughout the lawn, a broadcast application on the entire lawn is appropriate. These effective practices balance pest control with protecting the environment.

9 Buy only the amount of product needed for the season.
If you have leftover product, it should be stored in a cool, dry area, preferably on a shelf or in a cabinet. Never dump leftover product into the storm sewer or down the drain. Dispose of empty packaging according to label directions.

10 Conserve water through proper irrigation.
It's important to use our natural water resources carefully. The appearance of your lawn will tell you when it is time to water. You will see the leaves begin to wilt or the lawn develop a bluish cast when water is needed. If rain does not fall, the time between needed irrigations is about 5 days for light sandy soils and up to 20 days for heavy clay soils.