

### Hand pick or spot treat weeds when possible

If only a few weeds are present, it is easier and less time-consuming to physically remove the plant (and as much of the root as possible). Try and remove weeds while they are young and definitely before they flower and produce seeds.

### If you must treat with chemicals, consider using the least-toxic chemical

Several non-toxic products are readily available such as herbicides made of vinegar or strong soap concentrates for spot treating weeds. Corn-gluten has been suggested for use in preventing germination of weed seeds. See your local supplier for the latest non-toxic products.



## FINAL THOUGHTS

Battling weeds can be time-consuming, frustrating and expensive.

**Your best defense is a healthy lawn.**

**Change your attitude towards weeds.**

A few weeds and a healthier green-space is better than no weeds and a toxic lawn.



This brochure was prepared with information from the following useful healthy lawn websites:

10 Steps to Non-Toxic Lawn Care  
[www.sierraclub.ca/national/programs/health-environment/pesticides/index.shtml](http://www.sierraclub.ca/national/programs/health-environment/pesticides/index.shtml)

Natural Lawn Care  
[www.eartheasy.com/grow\\_lawn\\_care.htm](http://www.eartheasy.com/grow_lawn_care.htm)

Natural Fertilizer and Lawn Info  
[www.guarding-our-earth.com/aggrand/naturallawn.htm](http://www.guarding-our-earth.com/aggrand/naturallawn.htm)

Home Lawn Weed Control - University of Arkansas  
[www.uaex.edu/Other\\_Areas/publications/PDF/FSA-2109.pdf](http://www.uaex.edu/Other_Areas/publications/PDF/FSA-2109.pdf)

The mission of the Pesticides Focus Group is:  
"To promote the safe and responsible use of pesticides, and actively encourage the use of alternatives, through the support of new policies, regulations and educational programmes".

This brochure has been produced by the



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THE ANIMAL & Garden HOUSE



**Please use all pesticides safely. Follow all instructions on the labels.**

The Pesticides Focus Group will not be liable for the misuse of any of the suggested pesticide alternatives.

For more information visit  
[www.bermudacommunity.com/pesticides.asp](http://www.bermudacommunity.com/pesticides.asp)  
or email us at: [pesticidesfocus@bermuda.com](mailto:pesticidesfocus@bermuda.com)



# Got Weeds?

You CAN have a green healthy lawn without harming wildlife, damaging the environment or endangering the health of your family and pets.

Follow these easy tips to a "greener" lawn.



# WHAT IS A WEED?

To some, it's a plant out of place, to others, it's an unwanted plant. Still, others seem to think a weed is simply a plant that overtakes a lawn by crowding out grass.

Today's home-owners are persuaded by advertising that lawns should be 100% weed free. However, weeds are merely opportunistic plants that are taking advantage of lawns that are stressed or poorly managed.

Chemical companies offer quick fix **"weed 'n' feed"** products that reportedly eliminate weeds and fertilize lawns. However, these products contain pesticides that can damage the environment and possibly

compromise the health of your children, pets and wildlife.



**Changing the focus from weed eradication to weed prevention will help everyone understand that an occasional weed or pest is a sign of a healthy and natural lawn.**

This pamphlet will provide you with some easy tips that can strengthen your lawn, eliminating the need for chemicals.



**FACT:** Pesticide residue can remain on the lawn even after it has dried.

Many lawn pesticide products are suspected of causing long term health problems and children are considered to be more vulnerable to pesticides than adults.

Refs: Pennsylvania Resources Council  
[www.swpahhw.org/pubs/lawn-care-brochure.pdf](http://www.swpahhw.org/pubs/lawn-care-brochure.pdf)  
[www.beyondpesticides.org/lawn/factsheets/facts&figures.htm](http://www.beyondpesticides.org/lawn/factsheets/facts&figures.htm)



**FACT:** When lawn pesticides (herbicides, insecticides etc.) are used, 60-90 % of earthworms are killed. Earthworms are important for good soil health.

- Lawns do more than make your garden look good. They absorb water, which reduces erosion and improves water quality.
- Lawns have a significant cooling effect, provide oxygen, trap dust and dirt, promote healthy micro-organisms and wildlife and filter rain-water contaminants.

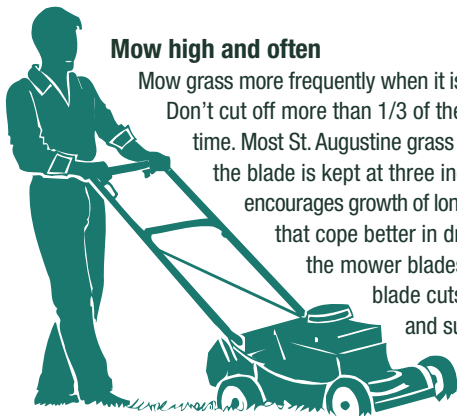
## HEALTHY LAWN BASICS

### Choose an appropriate grass

Some grasses grow better in shade or full sun. Contact your garden centre to choose the correct grass for your area. St. Augustine grass (known locally as "crabgrass") commonly suffers from chinch bug infestations where the grass dies in large areas, seemingly for no reason. Weeds quickly colonise the available space. Replacing grass with "Floratom", a chinch-resistant variety of the crabgrass, eliminates the unsightly dead patches and reduces the need to apply insecticides to the lawn.

### Mow high and often

Mow grass more frequently when it is actively growing. Don't cut off more than 1/3 of the leaf blade at a time. Most St. Augustine grass is healthiest when the blade is kept at three inches long. This encourages growth of longer, healthier roots that cope better in drier periods. Keep the mower blades sharp so that blade cuts are not ragged and susceptible to more water loss.



### Leave grass clippings on the lawn

Short loose clippings will become your lawn's fertilizer reducing the need to add additional chemical fertilizers.



**FACT:** The average treated suburban U.S. lawn receives more pesticide per acre than farmland.

Ref: Ithaca College  
[www.ithaca.edu/alternativelandscaping/index.html](http://www.ithaca.edu/alternativelandscaping/index.html)

### Water 'deeply' but not too often

Improper watering may weaken lawns. Frequent brief watering promotes root growth near the soil surface only, which dries out quickly during hot, dry periods. Deep infrequent watering encourages deep roots which can support a healthier lawn.

### Fertilize responsibly

Do not use **"weed 'n' feed"** products unless you really need to control lots of weeds. It just adds chemicals to the environment. Use organic or natural fertilizers from animal, plant or mineral sources. Follow the label and avoid overfeeding. Apply in early fall and mid spring.



### Aerate

Soil that becomes compacted in high traffic areas does not allow oxygen and water to penetrate and therefore deep root growth in these areas is not possible and grass will die. Weeds can thrive in compacted soil.

Aerating creates small holes or pores in the soil to allow air, nutrients and water to seep down.

### Control "thatch" build up

Thatch is the layer of stems, stolons and roots that develops between the blades and the soil surface. This layer should be about 1/2" on a healthy lawn, and kept in balance by natural decomposition, earthworms and micro-organisms. Thatch is caused by over fertilizing and infrequent mowing.

Too much thatch prevents water and nutrients from reaching the grass root. Reduce by raking with a steel rake, or having a landscaping company professionally de-thatch.

**FACT:** Per hour of operation, a gas lawn mower emits 10-12 times as much hydrocarbon as a car. A weed-eater emits 21 times more, and a leaf-blower emits 34 times more. Consider using a push-mower to reduce environmental pollution.

Ref: Kentucky Air Pollution Control Department  
[www.louisvilleky.gov/APCD/lawn-care](http://www.louisvilleky.gov/APCD/lawn-care)