

Healthy Lawns

With minimal maintenance and regular mowing, lawns managed without weed killers are just as aesthetically pleasing as treated lawns. Because pesticides pose an unacceptable risk to children, rivers, and streams, we urge grounds staff, lawn care professionals and homeowners to simply remove pesticides (weed killers, insecticides, and fungicides) from their management plan.

Clearly, once weed killers are eliminated, there will be a diversity of plants in addition to grass, creating a healthier, good neighbor lawn. Remember, dandelions and violets will not harm anyone, but weed killers do.

In Ontario, Canada, where cosmetic use of lawn pesticides are banned (since 2008), people have learned to live with diverse lawns. In the state of New York, K-12 school grounds cannot be treated with pesticides, including athletic fields.



School soccer field in Ontario, Canada.



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Managing A Healthy Lawn

Depending on your taste, there is a spectrum of lawn management strategies, ranging from low management (basic lawn, park, home) to high management (athletic fields).

Here are 4 considerations for basic lawn management without pesticides (any lawn care company can do these for you):

- Mow high (at least 3") so that grass develops strong roots to compete against weeds.
- Over-seed and add compost periodically. In Iowa, late Aug-Sept are the best times. If there are bare areas, rough them up and seed them.
- If you have high foot traffic or athletic fields, aerate and seed.
- Consider converting certain lawn areas into native Iowa prairie plants.



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