

# Going Organic A Homeowner's Checklist

## Soil Health

- Test your soil to identify its pH and fertility levels
- Make your own compost by mixing food and yard waste
- Choose natural mulches which mimic nature's ground cover

## Pest Management

- Increase biodiversity
- Focus on prevention of pests
- Identify and remove invasive plants
- Use organic pesticides if necessary

## Lawn Care

- Add white clover, trefoil, or native grasses for drought tolerance
- Reduce the area of your lawn
- Set your mower to 3 to 4 inches and leave grass clippings on the lawn

## Planting

- Preserve or add native plants
- Observe the natural landscape and apply nature's lessons
- Grow more vegetables and less grass: convert some of your lawn into an organic garden

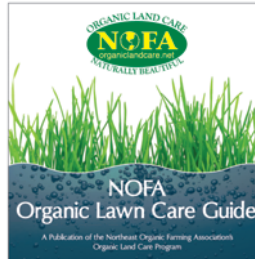
## Water Conservation

- Water infrequently and never more than 1" per week including rainfall
- Turn off automatic sprinklers
- Divert roof runoff to low-lying areas or rain barrels
- Plant buffers between yards and watercourses or wetlands to reduce runoff

# Organic Land Care Resources



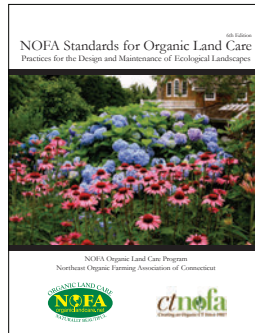
Introduction to Organic Lawns and Yards



NOFA Organic Lawn Care Guide



The NOFA Organic Fertilizer Fact Sheet



NOFA Standards for Organic Land Care

## Contact Us

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Started in 1999, the NOFA Organic Land Care Program is administered by CT NOFA: the Northeast Organic Farming Association of Connecticut  
www.ctnofa.org

# Organic Lawns and Yards



Information and resources you need to cultivate a healthy, sustainable yard using natural processes and leaving out harmful chemicals.



# Everything is Connected



Managing your yard as an ecosystem produces a healthy, balanced, and attractive outdoor space with less effort, cost, and maintenance.

Biodiversity, ecological cycles, and soil life support healthy plants, animals, and people.

# Harness the Forces of Nature

Promote biodiversity and choose native plants to support a self-sustaining yard that is resistant to pests.

Use natural fertilizers such as leaves and compost to add nutrients to your soil instead of synthetic fertilizers which disrupt soil biology and can pollute water.

Conserve water by using plants adapted to local rainfall patterns and by incorporating compost and mulch to retain water in the soil.

Encourage beneficial insects to naturally control pests as a form of organic Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

# Plant Local Think Global

Using compost and vegetation to retain excess water eliminates chemical runoff that harms watercourses, drinking water, and marine habitat.

Natural, on-site materials require little or no fossil fuel in production while fossil fuel is the main ingredient in synthetic fertilizer and the transport used to distribute it.

Organic landscaping addresses three of the world's main environmental challenges: climate change, loss of biodiversity, and excess nitrogen.

# Do Yourself a Favor

Make the switch from conventional to organic landscaping and just say "no" to the use of toxic chemicals and synthetic fertilizers, both of which harm many of our living systems.

Cut the chemicals - pesticides harm more than pests. Many pesticides are carcinogens and exposure can affect child development. Wild animals and pets may also be harmed.

Cut costs on repeated chemical applications, gasoline, and sprinkler systems. Use the free landscaping services offered by soil organisms, pollinators, compost, plants, and beneficial insects.

Mow less often - an eco-yard is meant to sustain itself the same way a natural ecosystem does; this means less cutting.

# Beyond Prevention

For persistent pest problems, when all other IPM methods have failed, reach for an Organic Materials Research Institute (OMRI) approved ([omri.org](http://omri.org)), least toxic and non-synthetic pesticide. Read the label and use sparingly.

The best way to manage weeds is to remove them using species-specific practices such as hand pulling, pruning, or animal grazing.



Take an online course in organic lawn care at your leisure, find an Accredited Organic Landscaper in your area, or view our professional resources by visiting our website:

[www.organiclandcare.net](http://www.organiclandcare.net)