



July 2022

How to Maintain Beautiful Lawn Using Fewer Fertilizers and Pesticides

Keeping your grass, plants, and garden healthy all season long can require constant attention, but it doesn't have to require the constant use of chemicals. Excessive use of fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides can do more harm than good for your landscape and lead to water pollution through the stormwater drainage system.

Fortunately, with a little research, knowledge, and planning you can create a landscape that requires fewer fertilizer and pesticide applications and will be healthier for you and the surrounding environment. Gaining familiarity with your lawn is the first step toward reducing your need for chemical inputs. This process begins by surveying your yard and taking note of various conditions in the area:

- Perform a soil test to determine if fertilizer is needed
- Determine if weeds have sprouted to decide between pre-emergent or broadleaf herbicides
- Find the areas where there is too much shade for plants to flourish
- Identify bugs to determine if what you see is harmful or beneficial

Choosing the right plants for the right conditions can result in a healthier landscape that requires fewer chemical applications to thrive. Understanding when a pest is merely present, versus when one is actually causing a problem, can reduce the number of chemicals used on the landscape.

Before using fertilizer or pesticide products – whether chemical or organic – always read the label to ensure they will work effectively and be healthy for the environment. Improper application and disposal of yard products can often lead to stormwater pollution as rain carries the excess product to storm drains and into waterways.

Be sure to avoid applying these products immediately before or during a rain event. Sweep granules back onto the yard where they belong. Get to know your yard to help make better choices about product applications, and you can achieve your landscape goals, prevent water pollution, and save some money.

If you have any questions about landscape issues, pest identification, or soil testing, contact the Gwinnett Extension Service at 678.377.4010 or gwinnettextension.com.