Whether you choose to maintain your own property or have a professionally trained landscape contractor do the work for you, you can have peace of mind knowing that your lawn is a safe and healthy place for your family and pets.

Because the techniques and products used for natural lawn care can be different from those you may be accustomed to, we have prepared this guide to help you understand more about natural lawn care programs.

This brochure contains a few of the most frequently asked questions.

Q. What is natural lawn care?

A. Natural lawn care refers to the maintenance of lawns and gardens without chemical pesticides. Natural lawn care involves developing and maintaining healthy soil which, in turn, sustains turf grass, ornamentals and trees with a minimum of watering, weeding or pest control.

Thanks to recent advances in soil science, it’s now possible to have a beautiful, lush lawn without the use of potentially harmful chemicals. In fact, natural lawn care is the fastest growing segment of the lawn care industry.

Grassroots Environmental Education, a non-profit organization, has been a leader in the field of natural lawn care since our founding in 2000. Since that time we have conducted scores of two-day training programs throughout the Northeast, where hundreds of private landscapers and institutional turf managers have learned the science and practice of natural lawn care.

For more information about Grassroots and our many educational programs and materials, please call or write:

Grassroots Environmental Education
184 Main Street
Port Washington, NY 11050
(516) 883-0887
Q. Can a natural lawn program make my property look as nice as a chemical lawn program?

A. Yes, you can have a beautiful lawn without the use of chemical pesticides. Natural lawns have thick, lush turf and are naturally more resistant to drought than chemically maintained lawns.

Q. Will there be any weeds in my lawn?

A. Over the past fifty years consumers have been conditioned by advertising to believe that a weed-free, chemically maintained lawn is a healthy lawn. While it’s possible to have a weed-free natural lawn, the fact is that most healthy lawns have at least a few weeds. Chemical pesticides eliminate weeds temporarily, but they always come back. For many families, the potential health risks of these chemical toxins, especially for children and pregnant women, outweigh the temporary aesthetic benefits.

Q. What will I notice first about my natural lawn program?

A. First, your lawn care professional will perform a soil test. The results of that test will reveal the current condition of your soil and help determine which soil amendments are needed on your property.

Your lawn care professional may apply a surface application of compost, compost tea, corn gluten, lime, organic fertilizer and a seaweed or kelp extract, depending on the needs of your soil. These soil amendments help develop the natural biology of the soil and will disappear in just a few days. Most lawns will also require aeration to increase oxygen levels in the soil and provide direct access for moisture and nutrients to enter the soil profile.

Q. Will I see any pesticide warning flags on my property?

A. Under the regulations of many state agencies, commercial applications of any product intended to control pests require the applicator to post warning signs. This may include natural products such as corn gluten, garlic barrier or compost tea.

Q. I like my grass cut really short. Is that a problem?

A. Yes! Healthy grass plants require a certain amount of leaf area for photosynthesis; cutting grass short deprives the plants of the leaf area they need to create and store energy. Taller blade length also provides shade to the roots, discourages weeds and keeps plants healthy by helping them retain moisture during droughts. Natural lawns are usually cut about three inches high. If you are planning a special outdoor event, talk with your landscaper; lawns can be cut shorter for brief periods if necessary.

Q. Why does my landscaper leave grass clippings on the lawn?

A. Lawn clippings provide a valuable source of nitrogen and should be left on the lawn whenever possible. Soil microbes will quickly break down the clippings, and they will disappear in just a few days. Clippings can be removed for special occasions. Talk with your landscaper if you have an event planned.

Q. Is it true that it can take years to make the transition to a naturally maintained lawn?

A. Depending on the condition of your property, it can take as little as one season to make the transition. Properties that have been neglected or heavily sprayed for years may take more time, but eventually any property will respond well to natural lawn care techniques.

Q. How do I know if my lawn care professional is part of the GHLP program?

A. All participating GHLP lawn care professionals have successfully completed training courses in natural lawn care. They are listed on the program website and are authorized to use the GHLP logo on their vehicles and in their advertising. GHLP lawn flags are available from your participating lawn care professional or from our office. For more information please call (516) 883-0887.