

Landscape Planning and Maintenance

Homeowners should consider best environmental practices when planting and caring for their lawns and gardens. Certain chemical herbicides and fertilizers can damage surrounding plant life and wetlands areas. If not applied properly the chemicals can also flow into the Sound or the aquifer supplying our drinking water. FIDCO recommends the following practices, which follow Suffolk County regulations:

- **Minimal use:** Use fertilizer and herbicides as little as possible.
- **Go Organic:** Try to use organic products rather than chemicals. Organic fertilizers may provide better weed prevention particularly at higher grass cutting heights.
- **Use of fertilizer with “Slow Release” nitrogen.** Lawn fertilizer often contains quick release nitrogen (water soluble nitrogen) and slow-release nitrogen (water insoluble nitrogen). Use a fertilizer that contains at least 50% “slow release” nitrogen which is less likely to leach and is a good choice for very sandy soils.
- **Trained Professionals:** It’s always best to use trained professionals who are familiar with appropriate dosing and application procedures.
- **Cut and Paint:** Careful and precise ‘cut and paint’ method for herbicide application is much safer to surrounding plants and water sources than general spraying application.

The use of herbicides and fertilizers is regulated by Suffolk County. Please note:

- **Timing:** Local Law No. 41-2007 in Suffolk County, NY prohibits fertilizer application from November 1st to April 1st. Violators may be fined up to \$1,000.
- **Phosphorus:** As of January 1, 2012, the NYSDEC has prohibited the use of phosphorus fertilizers for turf grass unless a soil test indicates phosphorus is needed, or if establishing a new lawn. Therefore, when purchasing turf fertilizer in New York State the middle number in the fertilizer grade should now be zero.

Further details can be found at:

<https://healthylawns.suffolkcountyny.gov/lawn/index.htm>