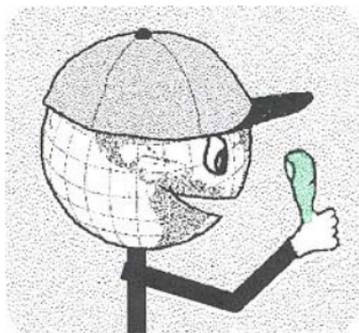


MONMOUTH COUNTY PLANNING BOARD'S ECO-TIPS

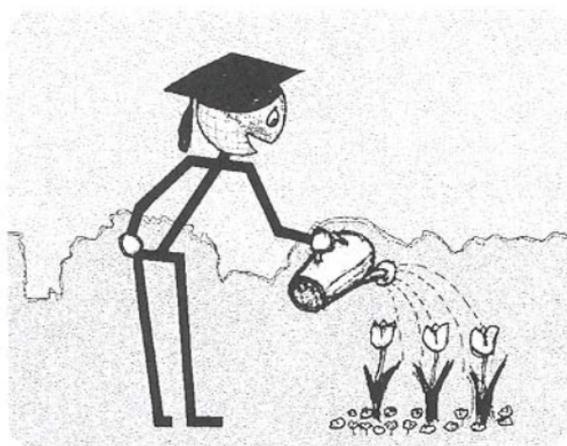


for LAWNS & GARDENS

A lush green lawn is the most prominent feature of suburban neighborhoods. Lawns can control erosion, absorb heat, and offer recreational areas. However, non-point source pollution can result from inefficient lawn and garden care. The use of fertilizers, pesticides, watering and mowing can also be costly. The chemicals found in fertilizers and pesticides can be toxic and their overuse may contaminate both surface and ground water. There are several alternative ways to manage lawns that offer beauty while protecting the quality of our water.

SMART LANDSCAPING

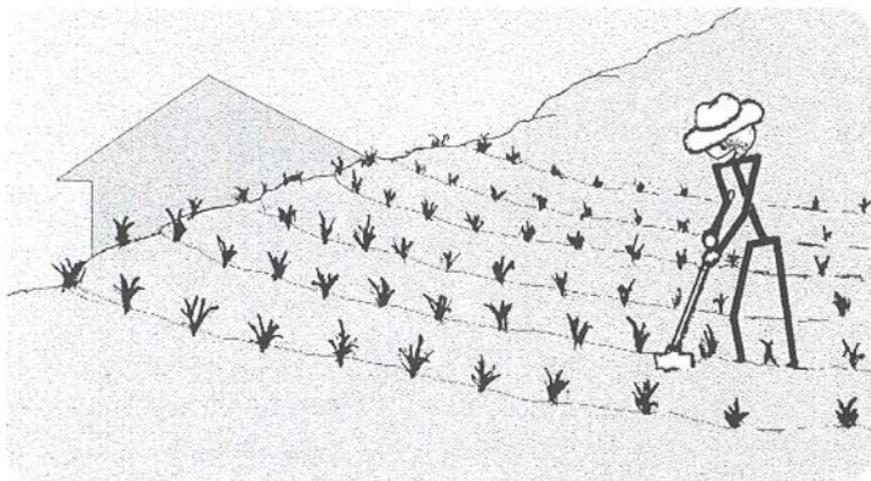
Adding a variety of native plants, ground covers and gardens to your landscape may significantly decrease your turf size while adding interest. You will decrease the need for mowing and may ultimately



reduce the need for water, fertilizers and pesticides. Ground covers, or organic mulches, such as wood chips, can reduce lawn size

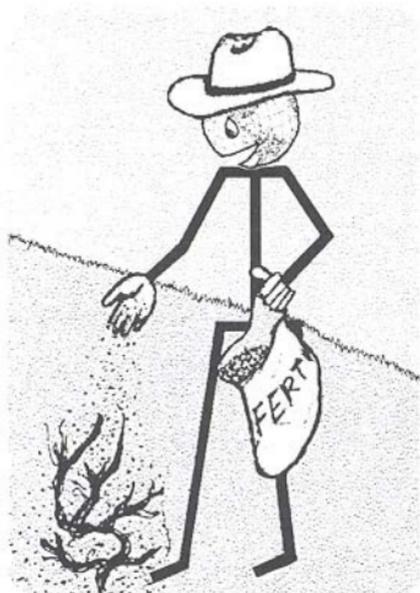
while providing more aerated surfaces for water infiltration. All of these steps can help prevent water pollution and reduce water use. They can also save time and money.

It is important to choose the right plants for your property. This can reduce the need for fertilizers and pesticides. Choose plants native to your area as they require less watering and fertilization. For instance, if you live near the sandy coast, use drought tolerant plants. If you have many trees, choose shade tolerant varieties.



If your property has slopes, plant your vegetable or flower garden rows across the slope to create terraces which trap rainfall and increase infiltration. This will prevent soil from running down the slope and into storm drains and nearby streams. Ground covers can add interest to a landscaped slope as well as stabilization.

FERTILIZERS



It is important to use fertilizers correctly and efficiently to obtain the most desired result without adding to pollution. Knowing when to fertilize, how much to add and which type to use are effective ways of making fertilizer use more efficient. First, make sure your lawn will accept fertilizers. Your lawn pH should be between 6.0 and 7.0 in order to utilize the fertilizers. Kits that measure soil pH can be found at gar-

den centers. The type of fertilizers you use can also impact water quality. Organic and time release fertilizers work in a more natural way. The packaging on store bought products should give advice about how much to use, depending on the size of your lawn.

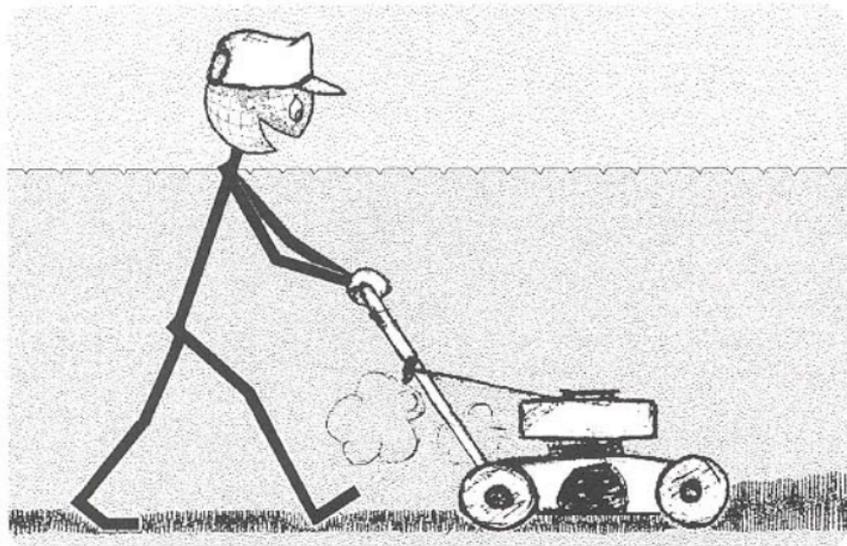
Using compost from your garden and yard waste can be a cost effective way to fertilize. Pile your fruit, vegetable and yard wastes in a spot that gets a mix of sunshine and shade. Aerate, or turn the pile periodically and water it frequently. Try to keep the size of your pile no larger than three feet by three feet for best results. The process works faster in smaller piles. The grainy black compost that is the result of the process is great for fertilizing flower beds, vegetable gardens and potted plants.

Fall is the optimum time to fertilize and lime your lawn. Do not fertilize during rainy or windy conditions, this will provide opportunity for the fertilizer to blow away, or to wash away and end up in the local waterways.

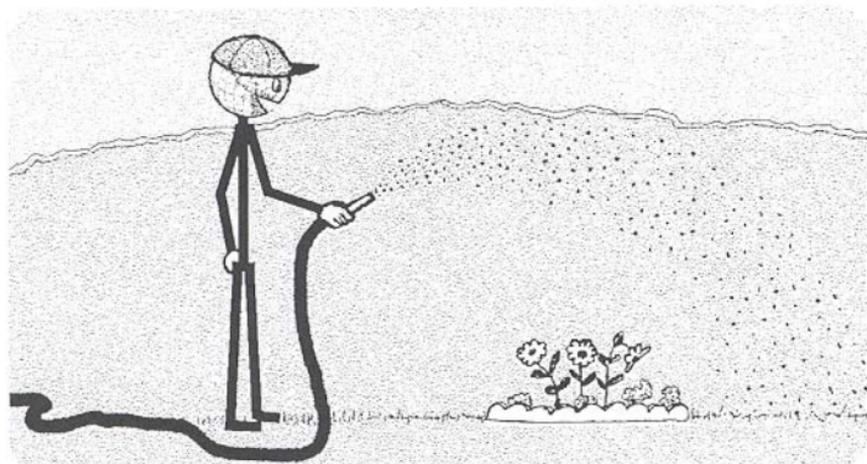
MOWING

When mowing, it is good to leave the grass clippings on the lawn. Allowing the clippings to decay in place returns nutrients to the topsoil. Do not cut your grass too short. That may weaken the turf, reduce infiltration and increase the potential for erosion.

To avoid weeds from taking up residence in your lawn, let your grass grow a little longer than normal. This blocks out the sunlight and prevents weed growth.



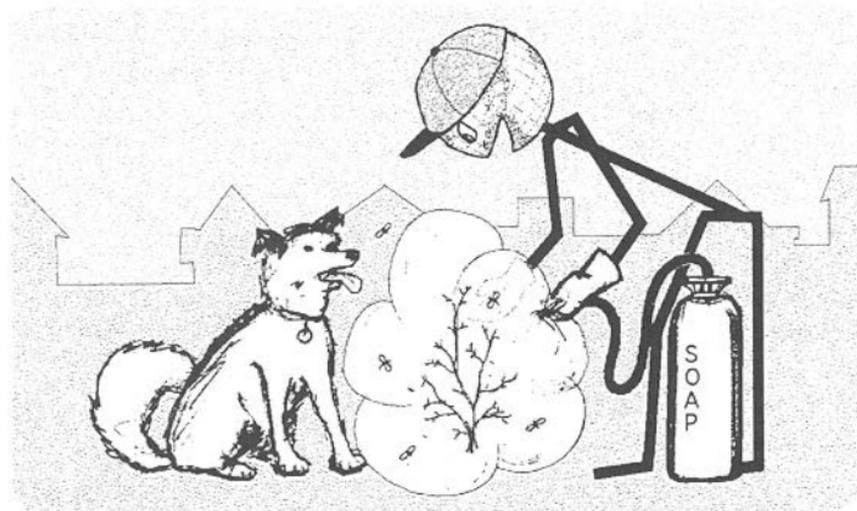
WATERING



Careful watering is a very important part of good lawn maintenance. One common mistake is over-watering. Watering is only necessary during very dry periods. Giving your lawn too much water can cause crabgrass invasions, shallow rooting and disease. When you need to water, do it early in the day, before the sun is too strong. A good way to monitor the amount of water you are using is to put an empty tuna or cat food sized can on your lawn. When the can is full, you have watered your lawn enough.

PESTICIDES

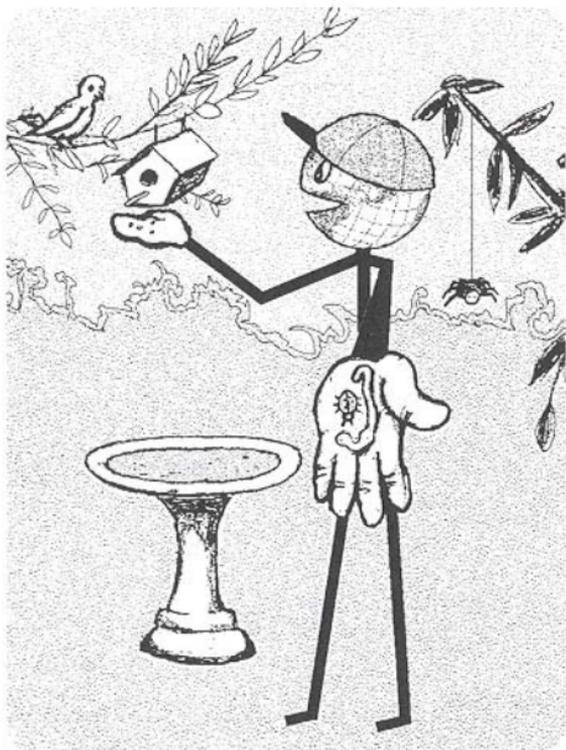
Pesticides control weed growth, fungus and eliminate unwanted insects. When introduced into the water cycle, pesticides can harm wildlife, aquaculture and human health. To ensure that pesticides do not impact the water cycle, use them sparingly, properly and with caution.



You can rid your yard of harmful insects without using chemical pesticides. There are a variety of non-toxic elements that can be used, such as used dishwater, hot pepper sprays, insecticidal soaps and either garlic or liquid soap diluted in water. In some cases, a forceful stream of water from a hose can dislodge insects from their feeding sites. This may even prevent them from coming back for a few days. There are commercial products available that are less toxic than standard pesticides. BT (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) is a natural bacteria that kills the grub phase of Japanese beetles, leaf-eating caterpillars and Milky Spore. Oil sprays are effective for controlling scale insects, red spiders, mites, mealybugs, aphids and whitefly larvae.

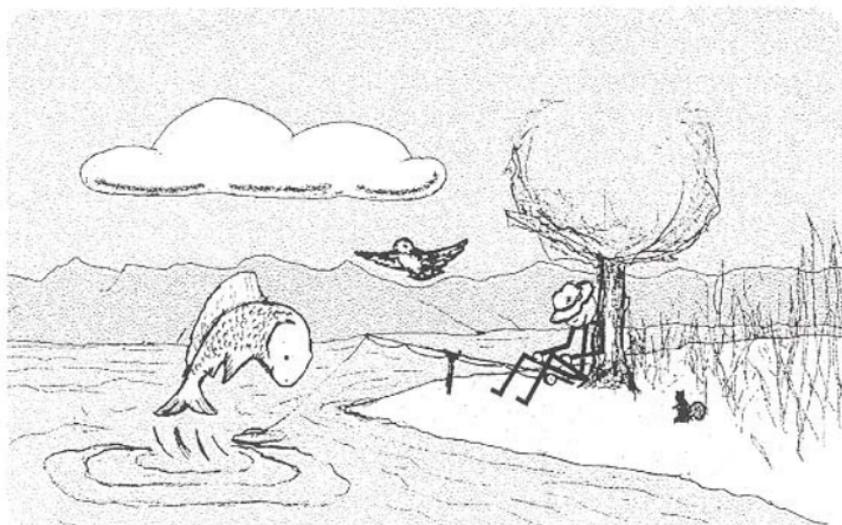
Companion planting is another way to deter harmful insects from your yard. Flowers such as marigolds deter pests such as Squash Bugs, Tomato Hornworms, Whitefly and Nematodes. Mint is

also a good companion plant. It deters Ants, Aphids, Flea Beetles, and Cabbage Worms. Onions, radishes, garlic, geraniums, rosemary and nasturtium also deter insects. Introducing beneficial insects such as lady bugs, praying mantises, lacewings, dark ground beetles and lightning bugs can decrease pest populations. Birds that prey on insects for food can be encouraged. Putting a bird house, feeder or bath in the yard will attract almost any bird and allow for year round pest control. Rotating crops in your gardens may reduce the chance of pest infestation, while boosting nutrient return.



ALTERNATIVES

If you must use chemicals to treat your lawn or garden, read packaging labels and only apply to the affected areas. Never apply pesticides when it is windy or rainy, as this reduces their effectiveness and increases the potential for water contamination.



Proper lawn and garden care are two significant ways in which private citizens can contribute to clean water. If all of the lawns and gardens across the state were carefully managed, water quality would improve. Remember, you can have both a beautiful yard and clean water!

For More Information Call:

Monmouth County Planning Board Environmental Planning Section
at (908) 431-7460

or Write

Monmouth County Planning Board Environmental Planning Section
Hall of Records Annex
One East Main Street
Freehold, NJ 07728

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