



IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Organic Landscaping Safer for People and the Environment, Group Says

With questions about the safety of toxic lawn chemicals and concerns about the impact of petroleum-based synthetic fertilizers on soil health, water pollution and global warming, the National Coalition for Pesticide-Free Lawns issued its Spring message to homeowners and land managers: Go organic!

(Washington, DC, April 16, 2007) As the lawn chemical companies hit the advertising airwaves this Spring pushing companies like “Lawn Doctor” and “Scotts,” the National Coalition for Pesticide-Free Lawns is urging homeowners and land managers to reject toxic pesticides and synthetic, petroleum-based fertilizers and instead adopt organic products and practices. The Coalition is a consortium of public health and environmental groups and landscapers nationwide that points to the long list of scientific studies documenting the human health, wildlife, pet, and environmental hazards associated with pesticide products used by the typical commercial lawn care companies and sold at lawn and garden centers.

“Scotts Miracle-Gro Company advertising this season is particularly misleading because it suggests practices such as sweeping chemical granules off driveways and pavement after lawn application to protect local waterways, while the program they are selling introduces unnecessary health and environmental hazards given the viability of organic non-toxic practices,” said Jay Feldman, executive director of Beyond Pesticides. Chemical lawn pesticides are linked in the scientific literature to cancer in people and pets, and are known to be toxic to the nervous and immune system, endocrine disruptors, and tied to respiratory effects such as asthma. Organic practices rely on maintenance techniques and soil health that prevent unwanted insect and weeds.

The Coalition promotes *A Simple Guide to Creating a Healthy Lawn, Read Your “Weeds,”* for parks, lawns and playing fields this Spring that addresses the whole turf system, including developing healthy soil, maintaining a proper pH balance, selection of appropriate grasses and other plants, aeration of compacted soil, timely thatch removal, and proper mowing, correct watering, and organic fertilizing methods.

The National Coalition for Pesticide-Free Lawns maintains a website with scientific documentation on the hazards of chemical lawn care, the benefits of organic care, and activist tools for community change, <http://www.pesticidefreelawns.org>. A new public service announcement, *Organic Lawns Now!*, was released today. This Winter the Coalition offered the first on-line training in Organic Land Care for Municipalities and Transitioning Landscapers with organic horticulturist, Chip Osborne (Marblehead, MA) with participants from 18 states, District of Columbia and Canada. (Available on the website.) The Coalition saw a surge in activity last spring when activists in 39 states distributed the safe lawn door hang tags, *Want a Green Lawn Safe for Children and Pets*, providing information on pesticide hazards and alternatives, throughout their neighborhoods.

Landscapers offering alternatives to chemicals can be found at

<http://www.beyondpesticides.org/safetysource>.

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