

An important conversation with your lawn care professional

A Bay Paper from Friends of Casco Bay



Friends of Casco Bay
Casco BAYKEEPER

Did you know that the fertilizers and pesticides that are applied to your lawn may end up in the Bay? You can have a direct impact on the health of the Bay by changing how your lawn is cared for.



Pesticides are getting into Casco Bay.

Friends of Casco Bay has detected pesticides in stormwater running into Casco Bay in 13 coastal communities. Some samples were found to have levels of pesticides that the EPA has determined can harm fish and other aquatic life. We also helped Maine Board of Pesticides Control collect Casco Bay sediments to test for pesticides. Analyses found bifenthrin, sumithrin, and permethrin, all pyrethroids shown to be toxic to fish and aquatic invertebrates, including lobsters.

Our lawn fertilizers are over-fertilizing the Bay.

Friends of Casco Bay found excess nitrogen in more than 50 places we

sampled around Casco Bay. Nitrogen, a component of fertilizers, can stimulate the growth of nuisance and harmful algal blooms. Nuisance blooms can coat coves in green slime and smother sealife. Harmful blooms can make oysters, clams, and other shellfish toxic to eat. As algal blooms die and decay, carbon dioxide is released, causing coastal acidification and changing the chemistry of our waters, making it harder for clams and mussels to build their shells.

Here are some BayScaping practices to discuss with a prospective landscaper.

BayScaping helps you grow a green lawn that keeps Casco Bay blue. Before you hire a professional landscaper, [find out if it is legal to apply pesticides and fertilizers in your municipality.](#)

1. I do not want fertilizers and pesticides used on my lawn. If you follow a fixed timetable for applying pesticides and fertilizers, including weed-and-feed products, I will find someone else to work with.
2. I am looking for a partner to help me build up the health of the soil so that my lawn will not need chemicals. Can you care for my lawn without using lawn chemicals?



3. Mow the grass high — 3½ inches or more. Cut the lawn shorter (2-3 inches) just before winter to reduce the risk of snow mold. Vary your mowing pattern to prevent soil compaction. Do not mow in the rain.

(continued on reverse)

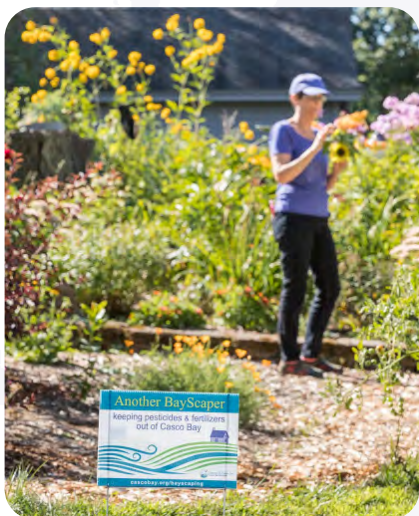


4. Leave the clippings on the lawn. This returns about 50% of the nitrogen back into the soil. Sweep up any clippings that fall on the sidewalk, driveway, or other impervious surfaces and put them back on the lawn.
5. In the spring and/or fall, please aerate the soil to improve drainage and loosen the soil.
6. If you need to apply grass seed to bare spots, I would like a BayScaping mix of 40% Creeping Red Fescue (endophyte enhanced); 30% Trifecta Perennial Ryegrass (endophyte enhanced); 20% KenBlue Bluegrass; 10% Chewings Fescue.

7. Please advise me about alternatives to turf grass. Can you recommend native groundcovers, bushes, and trees that require less maintenance and provide better habitat for wildlife? Where would be a good location for a raingarden? Help me choose plants that attract beneficial birds, butterflies, and honeybees.
8. If you need to establish or re-establish areas of my lawn, follow the procedures laid out in *Recommendations for Lawns Based on Water Quality Considerations*, which can be found on Friends of Casco Bay's website, cascobay.org.
9. Please give me a written contract with a detailed description of your services. I want to review and approve a new contract each year.



How does a chemical-free lawn benefit you?



Protects the health of Casco Bay.

Reduces health risks to your kids and pets. Pesticides increase the risk of cancer and asthma in children. Pesticides poison dogs and increase their risk of cancer. Pesticides and fertilizers can contaminate drinking water.

Saves money, maintenance, and the environment. Think about how much lawn you actually use and consider replacing high-maintenance turf grass with native plants or permeable pavement.

Builds soil health. Healthy soils matter. They are crucial to vibrant ecosystems and plant life and mitigate climate change by storing carbon (carbon sequestration) and slowing erosion. Pesticides and fertilizers can kill off beneficial fungi and soil organisms, making grass susceptible to pests and diseases.

Protects birds, bees, butterflies, and other beneficial insects. Bees are dying from pesticides; we need them to pollinate our flowers and food crops.

Friends of Casco Bay's mission is to improve and protect the environmental health of Casco Bay. Home to the Casco **BAYKEEPER**®, we are a founding member of the international **WATERKEEPER**® ALLIANCE.

cascobay.org
(207) 799-8574
keeper@cascobay.org
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