

## TOWN OF KENNEBUNKPORT, MAINE

– INCORPORATED 1653 –

### Kennebunkport Conservation Commission

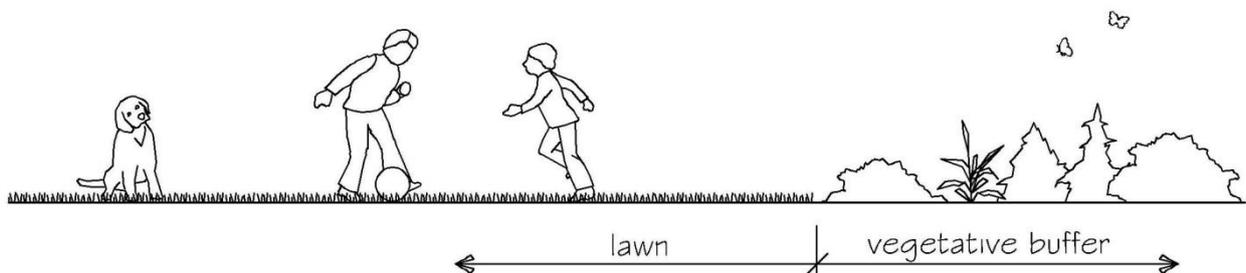
Dear Kennebunkport Homeowner:

Spring 2016

Do you hire a lawn care company to take care of your lawn? If so, your family's health and the health of your guests and pets, as well as the environment, is effected by how your lawn care company maintains your lawn. Hiring a company that follows Best Management Practices is important and on the back of this letter is a list of questions to ask your lawn care company regarding their policies for maintenance of your lawn.

Every time a pesticide or herbicide is applied on your property, the applicator is required by state law to post a sign with warnings about how long to stay off the lawn. The required sign size is only 4" x 5" and it's easy to miss. You can request that your lawn care company notify you prior to the application of pesticides and herbicides and let you know what product they are applying and of any precautionary measures following the application.

Limiting the size of your lawn and planting vegetative buffers at the edges of your lawn goes a long way toward filtering the harmful effects of fertilizers, pesticides and herbicides before they leave your property. Garden buffers can be great for the environment, especially if they consist of low maintenance, native plants.



It is possible to have a beautiful landscape and a healthy environment but it takes knowledge, careful planning and flexibility. We hope that you will consider the health of your family and the environment when deciding who cares for your lawn. The Conservation Commission is here to help with recommendations and information.

Kennebunkport Conservation Commission,

Sarah Lachance, chair

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## **SEVEN QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR LAWN CARE COMPANY: \*\***

If you use a lawn care service and would like to have your lawn cared for in a healthy way, you can ask the following questions:

1. Will you do a soil test before applying any fertilizers? Find a company that applies fertilizer only when test results show that it's needed.
2. Are insect and weed control products applied on a fixed schedule? If so, this is not the company to hire, since weather conditions and the extent of the problem should be considered in any application program.
3. Do you use non-chemical controls where possible? Use spot treatments instead of broadcast applications? Use watering, mowing and aeration methods that improve grass plant health?
4. Are your pesticide applicators licensed by the Board of Pesticides Control? An applicator must be licensed in order to apply pesticides on a "for-hire" basis. (Pesticides include insecticides, herbicides, "weed and feed" products, fungicides and others)
5. Are you willing to mow higher (3" is recommended) and be flexible when you mow?
6. Can you make suggestions for a more sustainable or ecological lawn? For reducing lawn size? For planting native species?
7. Are you aware that Kennebunkport has adopted the state's Best Management Practices for the Application of Turf Pesticides and Fertilizers and are you willing to follow them? A PDF of the Best Management Practices is available on the Conservation Commission page on the Town's website: <http://www.kennebunkportme.gov/conservation-commission-0>

Above all, avoid the "one size fits all" approach to lawn care. Not every lawn is the same, and a reliable contractor should be able to tailor a program to fit your requirements.

\*\* All of these things are important when you maintain your own lawn as well!

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