

## Ideal Lawn Calendar

Dec.-Feb. Use calcium chloride and/or sand instead of salt for snow (salt is toxic to plants and pets)

April Hand-pull weeds or spot spray with organic herbicide. Apply corn gluten as preemergent control when forsythias bloom

May Aerate and consider overseeding. Apply fertilizer according to soil test. Top-dress with compost or organic fertilizer. Apply beneficial nematodes if need for grub control.

June Continue to monitor weeds. Begin watering. Monitor insect pests.

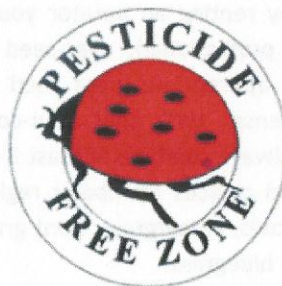
July Continue weeding, watering, and monitoring insects.

Late Aug. Pull-dig summer weeds. Aerate and overseed. Top dress with compost or organic fertilizer.

Sept. Limit watering. Apply beneficial nematodes as needed.

Oct. Begin fall cleanup using a mulching mower.

Nov. Remove all leaves and debris. Mow to 2" for final mowing of season.



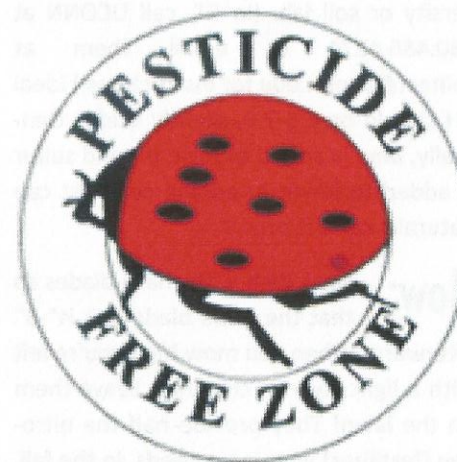
**PESTICIDE-FREE NEW CANAAN**

[www.pesticidefreenc.org](http://www.pesticidefreenc.org)

E-mail: [pesticidefreenewcanaan@yahoo.com](mailto:pesticidefreenewcanaan@yahoo.com)

**PESTICIDE-FREE NEW CANAAN**

## How Do I Go Pesticide Free?



[www.pesticidefreenc.org](http://www.pesticidefreenc.org)

# How Do I Go Pesticide Free?

Weeds and pests thrive in lawns that are improperly mowed, watered, and seeded; and in soil that is compacted, not pH balanced, and poorly fertilized. Pesticide-free lawn and garden care is simple and highly rewarding. The following should give you a general idea of how to proceed.

**Soil:** Before you do anything, test your soil. Do it through the Cooperative Extension Service of a state university or soil lab. (In CT, call UCONN at 860.486.4274 or email them at [soiltest@uconn.edu](mailto:soiltest@uconn.edu) for instructions.) Ideal pH should be 6.5-7.0, slightly acidic. Generally, lime is added to raise pH and sulfur is added to lower it; adding compost can naturally correct pH.

**Mow:** Mow high with sharp blades so that the grass blade is 2 ½"-3" afterward. When you mow high you're left with a light layer of clippings. Leave them on the lawn! They provide half the nitrogen (fertilizer) your lawn needs. In the fall, use a mulching mower and leave the leaves, too.

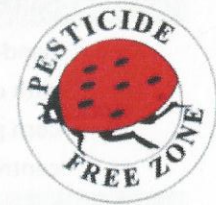
**Water:** Deep, infrequent watering promotes deep root growth. Watering needs are site specific, but generally a 1-inch watering once a week in early morning is best.

**Fertilize:** Fertilize in the early fall according to what your soil test tells you, being sure to use a slow-release formula; avoid synthetic/chemical nitrogen-rich fertilizers (they can kill valuable microorganisms and feed only the grass, not the soil). Remember that your grass clippings and mulched leaves act as fertilizer. Compost is also an ideal soil conditioner. Spread a ¼"-layer over the lawn in fall and spring (preferably after aerating).

**Grass Seed:** After aerating the lawn (in spring and/or fall, by renting an aerator yourself or hiring a professional), over-seed with a blend of appropriate grass seed to promote dense turf that out-competes weeds. Always combine at least 3-4 varieties. Good choices for cooler regions are ryes, fescues, wheatgrass, Bent grass, and Kentucky bluegrass.

**Weeds:** Hand pulling or digging out weeds is effective, as is pouring hot water over them or spot-treating with regular white vinegar. Hand-held flame weeding machines use targeted flames to kill weeds (Red Dragon 888.388.6724; Peaceful Valley Farm Supply 888.784.1722).

## What Does the Ladybug Mean?



Ideally, "pesticide free" means that no chemical herbicide or pesticides are used on our lawns or landscapes. If we follow good practices and allow for the occasional weed or insect, our lawns can look great—without harming human and canine health or the environment.

### MORE RESOURCES

Pesticide-Free New Canaan  
[www.pesticidefreenc.org](http://www.pesticidefreenc.org)  
Beyond Pesticides  
[beyondpesticides.org](http://beyondpesticides.org)  
Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA)  
[organiclandcare.net](http://organiclandcare.net)