



TOWN OF CHARLESTOWN

Charlestown Recommended Landscaper Process

Based on Best Management Practices the Town of Charlestown has learned, we recommend landscapers doing business in Charlestown utilize and agree to this process:

- Each company applying Herbicides / Pesticides must have employees that are RI DEM certified: <http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/bnatres/agricult/pesticide.php>
- Each company must take RI DEM Sustainable Turf Management for Landscapers scoring system and strive to be awarded a Green Certification by RI DEM. RI DEM Self-certification Checklist for Landscapers: www.dem.ri.gov/programs/benviron/assist/grncert/pdf/scapechk.pdf
- Soil tests should be made to determine lime requirements prior to any other application. If the pH is acidic, pelletized lime can be spread to raise the pH to make a healthier lawn, and not utilize nitrogen fertilizer
- Charlestown strongly recommends you utilize a soil test for nutrients (UConn and UMass), but the application of nitrogen not to exceed 2 #s / 1,000 sq. ft.
- Measure and document the lawn so that measurement can be used to only spread less than 2 pounds of nitrogen / 1,000 sq. feet annually. Use a non-water soluble or slow release nitrogen fertilizer. Speak to your professional supplier. The Town will work with local wholesalers and retailers to make slow release nitrogen fertilizers available
- No fertilizer application in buffer zones of ponds, roadways and driveways so runoff will not end up on our salt ponds. No fertilizing prior to rain or in rain
- Recommend maintaining a vegetative buffer between lawns and water bodies or salt ponds
- Good practice (organic) cultural methods that all landscapers should be following:
 - Lawns cut at 3", or the highest number on the lawn mower deck to reduce weeds, as higher grass means a cooler ground so weeds don't germinate. Not picking up the grass clippings is the equivalent of spreading one half pound of nitrogen fertilizer on the homeowner's lawn. Returning clippings will help with nutrient recycling and reduce fertilizer needs
 - Crisscross or diagonal mowing to not stress or compact the grass
 - Use a mulching mower and do not collect grass clippings. Sweep or leaf blow fertilizer and clippings back on lawn
 - Watering strategies that use only 1" of water per week (rain barrels or drip irrigation for crops and gardens, smart irrigation systems, and not hand watering or irrigation systems that pour unmeasured water on the lawn rain or shine). If your customer uses an automatic sprinkler system, water deeper no more than twice a week and have the customer use a rain gauge to stop watering during and immediately after rain. Recommend upgrading to an intelligent irrigation computerized system ensuring that watering of the lawn is infrequent. Properly adjust individual sprinkler heads to avoid watering paved surfaces and wasting water. Check with local homeowner's association about irrigation rules
 - Lawn aeration, coring, dethatching in the fall, slice seeding (over seeding) in the late summer or early fall. Over-seeding lawns thickens and creates a healthy lawn minimizing the use of chemical fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides
 - Plant drought and pest resistant grasses
- Educate the homeowner
 - What is a "Healthy Lawn" and what it takes to maintain a healthy lawn
 - There will be some change in color