10 Commandments for a Healthy Yard

Think, plan and plant around the 10 Commandments. Choosing strong native trees, shrubs, and grasses is your best defense against pests and weeds. Test your soil before planting. Adjust nutrients and pH accordingly. Post a sign designating your property a ‘Wildlife Sanctuary.’

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**Go Organic**
- Just say NO or limit exposure to toxic chemicals.
- Nourish with “brown gold” (compost), slow release organic rock fertilizers or limestone.

**Make Your Turf Tough**
- Use grass varieties developed for your area.
- Use sharp blades to mow 3 to 4 inches high. Short clippings decompose fast to add nitrogen instead of thatch.
- Water deeply only when needed and aerate for dense, deep roots.

**Go Native!**
- Native plants mean less care, less time, less expense.
- The more native plants in your yard, the more healthy habitats for birds and other wildlife.
- Challenge—REDUCE LAWN AREA by 25% this season.

**Know Your Enemies**
- Get a field guide to identify insects.
- Match control to pest.
- Use control only if a high number of insects exist.
- Learn life cycles so that you do not treat unnecessarily.

**Treat Only When Necessary**
- Use nontoxic methods first.
- Pick off and dispose of insects, vacuum, prune out infestations, or hose off garden plants.

**Pick Your Pesticides**
- Not all chemicals are created equal.
- “Shotgun” killers harm beneficial insects.
- Ask your lawn-care service to list pesticides used.
- Look for EPA toxicity ratings: caution (least toxic), warning, and poison.

**Use Biological Controls or Biopesticides**
- Most have very little environmental impact.
- Most decompose quickly and affect only the target pest.

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**What is the Stuff on Your Shelves?**

**INSECTICIDES** cause death by acting on the nervous system of insects. But they also poison birds, fish, and beneficial insects. Residues are left in soil, grass, air, water, and on fruits and vegetables.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACTIVE INGREDIENT</th>
<th>PRODUCT and USES</th>
<th>ALTERNATIVES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acephate</td>
<td>Orthene for aphids, leafminers, caterpillars, sawflies, thrips</td>
<td>Mail order facewings and ladybugs for aphids. Hose down plants. Use insecticidal soap for aphids, thrips, and whiteflies. Use pyrethrum for flying insects, boric acid for fleas and cockroaches, parasitic nematodes for fleas, ground level plates with beer, or lettuce leaves picked up in the heat of the day for snails and slugs.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bendiocarb</td>
<td>Ficam for mosquitoes, flies, fleas, ants, cockroaches, ticks, silverfish, snails, slugs, wasps</td>
<td>Use bait stations with diflubenzuron (Sire, Temit Bait) or hexaflumuron (Sentricon) for termites, bifenthrane (Floralite) for spider mites, milky spore disease for Japanese beetle grubs, Beauveria bassiana for fungal chinch bugs, parasitic nematodes for grubs, beetles and grasshoppers. See Chrysoperla above. Use insecticidal soap for aphids, whiteflies, and mealybugs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chlorpyrifos</td>
<td>Durban, Dragon, Ortho-Klear for ants, crickets, armyworms, ticks, mites, chicth bugs, roaches, fleas, earwigs, cutworms, grasshoppers, millipedes, sawbugs, white grubs, turf weevils</td>
<td>Use superior or summer oils for mites, aphids, thrips, and whiteflies. Use Rafflesi thuringiensis (IIR) on caterpillars (can kill beneficial insects) and pyrethrum for insects.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diazinon</td>
<td>Bonide Soil Granules, Knock Out, Real Kill for aphids, bagworms, carpenter ants, lace bugs, scale, whiteflies, fire ants, grubs, cockroaches, fleas, termites</td>
<td>Use superior or summer oils for mites, aphids, thrips, and whiteflies. Use Rafflesi thuringiensis (IIR) on caterpillars (can kill beneficial insects) and pyrethrum for insects.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dimethoate</td>
<td>Cygon for caterpillars, mites, aphids, thrips, plant hoppers and whiteflies</td>
<td>Use superior or summer oils for mites, aphids, thrips, and whiteflies. Use Rafflesi thuringiensis (IIR) on caterpillars (can kill beneficial insects) and pyrethrum for insects.</td>
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**RODENTICIDES** kill rats and mice by hindering blood clotting so that internal bleeding leads to death over several days. Brodifacoum can last from 3 to 4 months and is toxic to wildlife.

**ACTIVE INGREDIENT**
- Brodifacoum

**PRODUCT and USES**
- d-CON, Talon G for rats and mice

**ALTERNATIVES**
- Rodent proof your house. Place cotton over peanut butter on traps.

**HERBICIDES** such as 2,4-D kill broadleaf plants. Contested studies have linked 2,4-D to cancer. It is moderately toxic to birds and highly toxic to fish and aquatic plants. GLYPHOSATE causes cell death in virtually any plant. Use carefully since toxicity varies depending on formulation and exposure.

**ACTIVE INGREDIENT**
- Glyphosate

**PRODUCT and USES**
- Roundup for killing virtually anything green

**2,4-D**
- Scotts Turf Builder Plus 2, Weed-B-Gone for control of many broadleaf weeds

**ALTERNATIVES**
- Use better mowing techniques, mulching, hand weeding. Maintain a healthy lawn by using grasses developed for your area, hand weeding, detaching, aerating. Add native plants and reduce lawn,

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**Follow Directions and Protect Yourself**
- Read labels before you buy or use a product.
- Always wear protective clothing while mixing and applying.
- Never use more than recommended. Remember—LESS IS BEST for survival of beneficial insects!
- Do not apply pesticides in windy conditions, near water sources, people, pets or wildlife habitat.
- Learn signs of pesticide poisoning.

**Respect Your Neighbor’s ‘Right to Know’**
- Notify your neighbor before using pesticides that could drift, remain on lawn areas, or settle in water. Children and pets are easily exposed and can take residues into homes.
- Ask neighbors and lawn services to do the same.
- Contact local municipalities to learn what, where, and when chemicals are used.
- Ask decision makers to consider safer alternatives.

**Teach Tolerance and Be Tolerant**
- Create natural yards with a variety of pests, predators, weeds, wildlife and native plant species.
- Plant bird and wildlife habitat.
- Enjoy controlled untidiness, not time-consuming lawn maintenance.
- Show by doing.
- Encourage neighbors to build continuous habitat from yard to yard.

**Important Phone Numbers:**

Cooperative Extension for safe disposal sites:
- Poison Control Center:

Wildlife Rehabilitator:

Native plant retailer: Audubon

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