

A Low-Maintenance Lawn: Good for you. Good for the Bay.

Lawns are now the largest crop grown in the Chesapeake Bay watershed (more than 3.8 million acres covering a staggering 9.5% of the watershed's total land area) and a principal source of Bay pollution. Each year area residents routinely over-fertilize their lawns. The excess nitrogen and phosphorus flows into rivers and the Bay creating "dead zones" where aquatic life (fish, crabs, and oysters) cannot survive.

Studies show that most lawns should be fertilized only once a year in the fall. In fact, fertilization in Spring and Summer can actually harm your lawn by stressing the roots and making it less resistant to disease. Are you spending money for fertilizer your lawn doesn't need and polluting our rivers and streams?

Take the CRC challenge. Adopt a Low-Maintenance Approach to Lawn Care.

- (1) Fertilize once in the Fall with a slow-release fertilizer¹.
- (2) Keep the mowing height at 3". This will shade out weeds and won't stress the roots.
- (3) Leave grass clippings on the lawn. After 2 years, fertilization can be reduced by 25%. This is called "Grasscycling".

Benefits include less expense, less mowing, less need for watering, a healthier lawn, a healthier Bay, and more leisure time.

For additional information, log onto the Chesapeake Club website at www.chesapeakeclub.org or contact the University of Maryland Home and Garden Information Center (1-800-342-2507 or www.hgic.umd.edu)

¹Note: if you apply crabgrass and weed inhibitor in the spring, be careful to buy products that contain only those ingredients. Many products sold as inhibitors actually have fertilizer as their main ingredients.
