ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY LAWN CARE

Environmentally friendly lawn care involves practices that prioritize the health of your lawn while minimizing negative impacts on local waterways such as the Back River and Chesapeake Bay.



Planting

Choosing native Virginia plants and grasses for your lawn can greatly benefit the environment. Plants such as Butterfly Weed, Turk's Cap-Lily, Coreopsis, Cardinal Flower, and Blue Wild Indigo are all native species that are adapted to the local climate and require less water and maintenance, reducing the need for excessive watering and fertilization. These plants also support local wildlife and pollinators, contributing to biodiversity and overall ecosystem health.



Watering

Water conservation is a vital component of eco-friendly lawn care. Utilizing efficient irrigation systems, like drip irrigation or soaker hoses, can minimize water waste. Practicing proper watering techniques, such as watering in the early morning or late afternoon to reduce evaporation, can ensure that your lawn receives the water it needs without overusing this precious resource.



Mowing

Regular mowing habits play a role in environmentally friendly lawn care as well. Keeping grass at a slightly taller height shades the soil, reduces weed growth, and retains moisture, thereby decreasing the need for frequent watering. Manual or electric mowers are preferable over gas-powered ones, as they produce fewer emissions and noise pollution.



Alternative Care

One key aspect is reducing or eliminating the use of synthetic chemicals, such as pesticides and herbicides. Instead, opting for natural alternatives like diatomaceous earth, neem oil, peppermint, thyme, rosemary oil repellent, or insect-repelling plants can help maintain a balanced ecosystem in your yard. Lastly, reduce the use of fertilizer, opting to use leftover lawn clippings instead. Alternative fertilizer reduces the nutrient loads that drain into the Chesapeake Bay and Back River, which is the number one cause of deadly algal blooms and fish kills.

Let's work together to keep our water clean!

For water quality concerns at Langley Research Center (LaRC) call: Ande Remington (757.864.8332), Sarat Calamur (757.864.4791), or James Griczin (757.864.5030)

In an emergency or spill, always call 911 (from a Center phone) or 757.864.2222 (from a cell phone).



LaRC is committed to maintaining an environmentally responsible landscape. To achieve this, LaRC employs a variety of eco-conscious practices.

Firstly, street sweeping and leaf collecting are diligently carried out to prevent debris and organic matter from clogging stormwater drains, reducing organic matter in local waterways. For example, LaRC blows leaves and grass clippings back onto the grass to restore important nutrients and keep the debris out of storm drains.

LaRC avoids the use of synthetic fertilizers, which can contribute to harmful nutrient runoff. Instead, we prioritize natural soil enrichment methods allowing for much of the local foliage to grow naturally.

LaRC also minimizes the use of herbicides and pesticides, reserving them only for as-needed situations and using only the bare minimum. By adopting such an approach, LaRC ensures that the delicate balance of the ecosystem on its grounds remains intact while still maintaining a visually appealing and safe environment for its employees and the surrounding community.

LaRC's dedication to environmentally friendly lawn care exemplifies its commitment to responsible stewardship of the environment.

We Want to Hear from You!

The Environmental Management Office encourages personnel to get involved in the water quality program by providing feedback on our <u>Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4)</u> Program Plan and outreach activities, and plans to meet the Chesapeake Bay TMDL reductions.

If you have any ideas on:

- types of outreach that you find are most effective (Inside Langley announcements, training sessions, posters, etc.),
- what outreach messages you would like to receive (local water quality issues, stormwater pollution basics, tips & tricks, etc.), or
- what our general outreach priorities should be, please email Ande Remington.

Want to learn more? <u>NASA Langley's environmental website</u> offers additional information about the Center's Water Program and more!



Information obtained from:

- askHRgreen
- Ariens
- EPA
- Virginia Green
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Salt Lake City Sustainability