

Helpful Home Tips



John PRICE and Heather PRICE

Sutton Group—Masters Realty Inc., Brokerage

1650 Bath Rd. Kingston ON, K7M 4X6

Off: 613-384-5500 Cell: 613-541-9043

Email: jprice3@cogeco.ca

Web: www.priceandprice.ca

Put Your Yard on a Chemical-Reduced Diet

Municipalities across Canada are tightening restrictions on herbicides and pesticides to protect people, wildlife, soil and water. Over the past 80 years, Canadians have piled toxic chemicals such as Mecoprop, Malathion and Diazinon onto their lawns and gardens. Ironically, their use has created pests that are more resistant and more difficult to control. It's better late than never to find natural alternatives to synthetics and avoid bylaw fines while still enjoying a lush, green yard this summer.

Begin at the root of the problem. Plants require nutrients to remain healthy and fight off disease. Yellowing leaves, an overgrowth of weeds and slow growth typically indicate a lack of nutrients (mainly nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium and sulfur). Test kits are available at garden stores to help you determine your soil's composition. The best way to deliver nutrients to plants is by adding slow-releasing amendments such as kelp, alfalfa meal, bone meal, dolomite lime, compost and fish fertilizer.

As you boost your yard's health, what about those pesky bugs that are damaging your roses and other plants? Aphids and ants are two common pests that can be controlled with diatomaceous earth. This is a fine powder consisting of the fossilized remains of diatoms, a type of hard-shelled algae. Sprinkle this powder on rose buds and other places frequented by aphids and ants. Also helpful in reducing aphids are pyrethrum, which is made from chrysanthemum flowers, and fatty acid soap solution.

Beneficial insects are also useful. For example, lady bugs kill aphids. Attract lady bugs by planting marigolds and cosmos flowers and hanging lady bug lures. To combat destructive soil-dwelling insects, purchase beneficial nematodes. These microscopic worms control grubs, cutworm, flea beetles and other pests.

As chemicals are being phased out, researchers have been busy finding innovative solutions and creating more effective natural products to assist homeowners.