

Rye Brook Healthy Yard Program

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Section I. Purpose of Program

The main purpose of a Rye Brook Healthy Yard Program is to promote the cultivation of safer, toxin-free yards in Rye Brook by discouraging the use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers and encouraging the use of more environmentally-friendly landscaping practices.

The Problem:

Americans use significant amounts of chemical fertilizers and pesticides to help achieve “the perfect lawn.” These chemicals cause significant damage to the environment in many ways including:

- 1) Water pollution from run-off.
- 2) Climate change – significant greenhouse gases produced through the production of chemical fertilizers.
- 3) Killing off pollinators – chemical pesticides kill both good AND bad insects.

Additionally, current landscaping practices which are commonly used in Rye Brook cause more issues including:

- 1) Excessive watering practices which leads to water waste, droughts, and weak grass (excessive water prevents oxygenation and weak roots).
- 2) Excessive mowing and leaf blowers create noise, air pollution and disturb wildlife habitats.
- 3) Removal of grass clippings and leaves reduces nutrient-richness of the soil and leads to the increased use of chemical fertilizers.

Section II. The Program

To be recognized as a participant in this program, a resident must attest to the following items via an online form. Residential applicants who attest to these requirements online, would be provided with a small metal lawn sign which they can display in their yard indicating their yard meets the requirements of being a Rye Brook Healthy Yard. We recommend collecting email addresses so we have a way to communicate with all residents participating in the program.

I, _____, residing at, _____, and reachable via email at _____, do so truthfully attest that:

- I do my own yardwork or employ a Westchester County licensed landscaper.
 - Verify your landscaper has a license to operate in Westchester County here: <https://consumer.westchestergov.com/trades/choosing-a-contractor/find-a-licensed-contractor>
- I do not use or allow the use of chemical fertilizers or chemical pesticides in my yard.
 - Chemical fertilizers require significant energy resources to produce (which generates significant GHG emissions) and pollutes local waterways through run-off.
 - Chemical pesticides are toxic and have been shown to contribute to nerve-related diseases and cancer. Pesticides kill beneficial insects along with the ones that are being targeted (ticks, mosquitos etc) and kill aquatic wildlife through run-off into local waterways.

Furthermore, I employ at least 3 of the 5 following environmentally-friendly landscaping practices (check all that apply):

- Mow grass high
 - Letting grass remain 3" or higher provides natural protection against weeds.
- Leave grass clippings in place
 - The nutrients in grass clippings are a natural fertilizer and should be left in place to feed your lawn.
- Mulch leaves in place
 - The nutrients in leaves are a natural fertilizer and should be left in place to feed your lawn. Leaf mulch improves soil structure, drainage and water retention. With the use of a mulching blade, leaves can be shredded to such a fine size that they will blend into your lawn and remain unseen.
- Infrequent watering practices (max 3x/week)
 - Watering infrequently will promote deeper root structure of your lawn.
- Minimal use of leaf blowers (usage suggested only during high volume fall cleanup period)
 - Leaf blowers cause numerous issues including noise/air pollution; climate change; and negatively impact nutrient retention and wildlife habitats

Signed: _____ Date: _____