

State Agricultural Officials Celebrate April as Lawn Care Month

BOSTON – Wednesday, April 10, 2013 – With the first hints of spring upon us, state agricultural officials are celebrating April as Lawn Care month and are encouraging residents to celebrate the benefits of a highly versatile grass plan.

“Many of us don’t think about the positive impact of lawns and landscaping in our day-to-day lives,” said Department of Agricultural Resources (DAR) Commissioner Greg Watson. “Lawns afford us serene settings, offer recreational outlets for sporting activities, and provide us with important environmental benefits. I encourage residents to visit their local garden centers to find out about good lawn and landscape care practices best suited to their environment and their lifestyles.”

Dense, healthy grass purifies backyards by slowing down and filtering runoff, removing contaminants and trapping soil. Fresh, filtered water then returns to the underground water supply. The root mass of turf grasses, along with the assistance of active soil microbes beneath the soil, help purify water entering underground aquifers by acting as a filter to capture and breakdown many types of pollutants. See picture below.

Typically, Massachusetts lawns and landscapes need no more than one inch of water per week, including the water received from rainfall. Drought-tolerant plants require even less, and native landscapes may require no supplemental watering once they're established. By incorporating efficient irrigation practices, including installing rainwater collection systems to supplement rainfall and low-impact development practices such as drought-resistant landscape techniques and rain gardens, gardeners can have an aesthetically pleasing garden with the least impact on water resources.

Whether you care for your lawn using Integrated Pest Management techniques, conventional programs or continuous overseeding with the varieties of grass seed best suited for the types of activities on your lawn, now is the time to check out local garden centers to find out what’s best for your area. The [Cooperative Extension Service](#) also has landscape messages regarding climate conditions in your geographical area. Reports are provided from around the state on a regular basis.

Grass is used as an effective form of erosion control worldwide. With up to 90 percent of the weight of a grass plant in its roots, it makes a very efficient erosion prevention device, also removing soil particles from silty water. Lawns also act as natural air conditioning systems and a healthy 50 x 50 foot lawn provides enough oxygen for a family of four.

[Click here to find a Massachusetts garden center near you.](#)

[Click here for more information on Best Management Practices for your lawn.](#)

DAR’s mission is to ensure the long-term viability of agriculture in Massachusetts. Through its four divisions – Agricultural Conservation and Technical Assistance, Agricultural Markets, Animal Health and Crop and Pest Services – DAR strives to support, regulate and enhance the rich diversity of the Commonwealth’s agricultural

community in order to promote economically and environmentally sound food safety and animal health measures, and fulfill agriculture's role in energy conservation and production. For more information, visit DAR's website at www.mass.gov/agr and follow us on twitter at [@MDARCommish](https://twitter.com/MDARCommish) and [@massgrown](https://twitter.com/massgrown).