








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Mowing: The Great American Tradition

The past few days have been rather summery, but it's been a cool start to the season with just enough rain to keep those colorful spring bloomers looking their best. It sure has been a spectacular spring! Almost every lawn is lush and green, and every neighborhood seems to be buzzing with lawn mowers.

This e-newsletter is dedicated to the great American tradition of lawn mowing. It's probably no surprise that your lawn mower is your most important lawn care tool. But did you know that proper mowing techniques help create a lush, dense lawn that is naturally resistant to drought, weeds and disease? This dramatically reduces the need for adding water and chemicals – saving you time

and money while protecting our water.

If you haven't already, check out the [mowing section of the Greenscapes Guide](#) for step-by-step guidelines for the perfect mow! And keep reading this issue to learn more about getting your mower in shape for great performance through the season. Please be safety-conscious when maintaining your mower's engine and blades – use safety gloves and glasses!

Happy Mowing,
Wendy Garpow, Editor
Massachusetts Bays Estuary Association

Lawn Care Calendar: Late Spring

Here's your checklist to keep your Greenscape looking great this spring and into the growing season! Follow the links to learn more about each recommendation. To see what's in store in the coming months, see the [complete Greenscapes Lawn Care Calendar](#).

- Continue to conduct [Thumb Test](#) and sharpen mower blade at least every 10 hours of mowing
 - [Treat weeds organically](#) or pull them by hand
 - Continue to leave clippings on the lawn for [free fertilizer](#)
 - Before Memorial Day, no need to water in average years
 - Conduct [Shovel Test](#) around Memorial Day to determine watering durations
 - After Memorial Day, conduct [Walk Test](#) and water if thirsty, but only if no [watering restrictions](#) in effect
 - Aerate and water [compost pile](#)
-

Free Greenscapes Workshops

Learn more about Greenscaping by joining us and leading yard care experts at a FREE Greenscapes workshop near you! Upcoming workshops are listed below. For complete details, visit the Greenscapes [event webpage](#).

- [Healthy Lawns and Landscapes Workshop \(Ludlow, June 3\)](#)
 - [Organic Lawn Care \(Easthampton, June 11\)](#)
-

Want to Host a Greenscapes Presentation?

Would your club or organization members like to learn how to have a beautiful, healthy yard in a free workshop? The NSRWA (Greenscapes South Shore partner) is looking for speaking engagements with service/community/social organizations and groups located on the South Shore such as Garden Clubs, Rotary Clubs, MOMS clubs, and others. Please contact [Debbie Cook](#) at NSRWA (phone: 781-659-8168) for more information.

Tip of the Month: Get Your Mower in Shape!

Start the mowing season off right by cleaning and tuning up your mower, sharpening your blades, and stocking up with the right tools!

- **Clean Under the Deck:** Removing old grass clippings from beneath the deck will ensure your blade has room to work properly. First turn your mower on up on its side (with the carburetor and air filter facing upwards) and then use a scraper or a hose. If you have a riding mower, you can get underneath by driving the front wheels up a set of ramps like those you'd use to change the oil in your car. After cleaning, spray with non-stick cooking oil to reduce clipping buildup.
- **Tune up your engine.** If you have a power mower, now's the time to change the oil, drain and refill the crankcase with oil, replace the spark plug(s), and clean/replace the air filter to ensure optimum performance. You can [do these tasks yourself](#) or take it to a service center (check the [Yellow Pages](#) under "Lawn Mowers-Sharpening & Repairing").
- **Sharpen your mower blades.** You can [do this yourself](#) if you have the time, or for very little money you can have it done professionally (check the [Yellow Pages](#) under "Lawn Mowers-Sharpening & Repairing"). Pick up a spare blade or two and an extra wrench in the size you need, so you'll always have a sharp one ready to go. PLEASE BE SAFE! Newly sharpened blades are VERY sharp. ALWAYS WEAR WORK GLOVES WHEN CHANGING THE BLADE!
- **Get a "no-spill" gas can for tank refills.** These containers help reduce evaporative emissions and wasted fuel. In addition, they help keep splashed gas off you and the ground, thus helping to reduce stormwater pollution and protect our water resources. Be sure to fill the fuel tank no more than three-quarters full to allow for expansion without overflowing.

In the Mood for Plants?

Have you already had your fill of mowing? Consider getting rid of some of your lawn and plant something that's prettier and easier to take care of! Check out the [Greenscapes plant list](#) for some new ideas and inspiration for your planting beds. Many local nurseries will provide a 15% discount on [Greenscapes plants](#) and some other products – see our [list of Greenscapes nurseries](#) to find one near you!

Here are some other great sources of information about low-maintenance plants:

- [Native Plants Searchable Database](#) (American Beauties)
- [Drought Tolerant Perennials Plant List](#) (UMass Cooperative Extension)
- [Drought Tolerant Plants for the Landscape](#) (Cape Cod and Plymouth)

Need Some Greenscaping Advice?

Like the idea of Greenscaping but not quite sure where to start in your own backyard? Or maybe you are a seasoned Greenscaper and would like some specific recommendations and expertise to help guide your efforts. Treat yourself and your yard to a Greenscapes Consultation!

Register now for a 60-minute private consultation at your home or business to learn how you can save time, money and water by implementing Greenscapes practices. A Greenscapes Advisor will conduct a site inspection, soil sample and professional analysis, and review of your existing maintenance practices. After the site visit, you will receive a written report with a summary of your soil results, and customized recommendations for a beautiful, healthy yard. The 60-minute consultations (including soil test and report) start at \$175. [Click here to learn more and to see the list of 2008 Greenscapes Advisors](#)

Free Seeds for Organizations

Free seeds are available through **Operation Free Plant** program of America the Beautiful Fund. Donations of 100 to 1,000 seed packets are available to organizations working to improve their communities through gardening for a nominal shipping and handling fee. Community garden programs that benefit the hungry; youth education programs; beautification programs for parks, roadways, and neighborhoods; and promotion of environmental stewardship are just a few of the uses for which organizations can apply. More info at http://www.america-the-beautiful.org/free_seeds/index.php or contact info@america-the-beautiful.org or (202) 638-2175.

The Greenscapes Coalition

The 2008 Greenscapes Massachusetts program is a collaborative education and outreach effort sponsored by the [Greenscapes Massachusetts Coalition](#) and many [Community Partners](#), [Grantors](#), [Underwriters](#), and [Supporters](#). Partnering organizations include the [Massachusetts Bay Estuary Association](#), [North and South Rivers Watershed Association](#), [Eight Towns & the Bay Committee](#), [Salem Sound Coastwatch](#), [Ipswich River Watershed Association](#), and the [Pioneer Valley Planning Commission](#).

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