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» **May is Mowing Month**

The May issue of the Greenscapes e-newsletter is dedicated to the American tradition of lawn mowing. Conditions are just right for your lawn to grow: the sun is shining strong and bright, the evenings are still cool, and spring rains are providing just the right amount of moisture. Chances are, the buzzing chorus of lawn mowers is echoing around your neighborhood.

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 the environment. Be sure to check out the [mowing section of the 2007 Greenscapes](#)

[Guide](#) for step-by-step guidelines for the perfect mow! Plus keep reading for more information about innovative lawn mowers and services, and mower maintenance tips to get the season off to a great start. And if you'd like to replace your lawn with something easier to maintain and perhaps even more attractive than turf, we hope you'll check out the [Greenscapes plant list](#) and take advantage of the [15% discount](#) generously offered by partnering nurseries in the regions.

~ [Wendy Garpow](#), Greenscapes Central Management
Assistant Director, Massachusetts Bays Estuary Association

Coalition Notes: South Shore

This month has been busy for Greenscapes South Shore! We've enjoyed meeting lots of Greenscapers at the South Shore workshop series and are so appreciative of the wealth of information our guest speakers have shared with us. The best is still to come – we hope you will join us Monday, May 21st for another great presentation by Deborah Swanson of Plymouth County Cooperative Extension ([click here for registration and additional information](#)). And if you are making plans to work in your garden this Memorial Day weekend, don't forget to visit the [South Shore nurseries that are generously offering a 15% discount](#) on our [recommended Greenscapes plants](#). Be sure to let our nursery partners know how much you appreciate their participation in the Greenscapes program!

~ [Julie Uhler](#), Greenscapes South Shore Manager
North and South Rivers Watershed Association

Coalition Notes: North Shore

Greenscapes North Shore is off and running! Our first two workshops on gardening with native plants and creating rain gardens were a resounding success. More than 30 people attended each workshop, and a dedicated group of 20 volunteers got hands-on experience by helping to build a native plant garden at Riverbend, the new Ipswich River Watershed Association headquarters at 143 County Road in Ipswich. This beautiful and low-maintenance garden is open to the community as a demonstration of Greenscaping techniques that protect our water resources. A hearty thanks to our workshop attendees, our speakers, Peter Phippen of Eight Towns and the Bay and Mike Clark of Weston & Sampson, and our garden designer, Denise King Landscape Designs.

~ [Emily Levin](#), Ipswich River Watershed Association
On behalf of the [Greenscapes North Shore Coalition](#)

Upcoming Events

[Free Workshop: Creating Rain Gardens and Recycling Rainwater](#)
[\(Click to register\)](#)

May 16, 2007 (7:00 PM - 9:00 PM)

Presenter: **Mike Clark, Weston & Sampson**

Location: **Torrigan Community Life Center, 79 Central Street, Peabody, MA**

Impervious surfaces such as rooftops and driveways shed rainwater often containing sediments and chemicals that eventually pollute our streams, ponds, and bays. Learn about creative landscaping methods to help filter pollutants as well as recharge rainwater into the ground. Learn step-by-step how to create your own backyard rain garden. Other topics include permeable pavers, rainbarrels, cisterns, and vegetated roofs.

[Free Workshop: Strategies for Reducing Inputs to Lawns \(Including the Use of Complementary Plants\) \(Click to register\)](#)

May 21, 2007 from 7 – 9 p.m.

Presenter: Deb C. Swanson, Plymouth County Extension

South Shore Vocational Technical School, Hanover MA

Learn how to reduce fertilizer, pesticides and water by careful site assessment, plant selection and proper planting. Topics include: low input lawns, ideas to minimize lawns, low maintenance ground covers, herbaceous perennials and ornamental grasses.

[Free Workshop: How to Phase Out Chemicals and Phase In Organics \(Click to register\)](#)

June 5, 2007 (7:00 PM - 9:00 PM)

Presenter: Don Bishop, Gardens Are...

Location: The Community House of Hamilton and Wenham, 284 Bay Road (Route 1A), Hamilton, MA

Learn the basics and the step-by-step process of transforming a conventional lawn or garden into a beautiful and environmentally friendly landscape.

Discover how to go organic with alternatives to fertilizers and pesticides that save you time and money, while reducing runoff into lakes and streams.

Electric Lawn Mowers

Are you in the market for a new lawn mower? Until recently there were really only two options when it came to lawn mowers: a push-type reel mower, or a gas powered mower. But today there is another option for a beautifully mowed lawn, all the while reducing your impact on the environment (and your neighbors).

Reel mowers (the “old-fashioned push mowers”) provide a very crisp cut of the grass blade, are lightweight, quiet, efficient, and don’t pollute. However, mowing a large and/or hilly lawn with a reel mower can be a lot of work, and even with a small lawn it can be tough to push a reel mower that is set at the ideal 3” blade height.

Mowers with gas engines may be easier to use, but are noisy and can be surprisingly big polluters. The average lawn mower is at least 100 decibels; noise levels over 90 can cause ear damage. The EPA estimates that 10-12% of the nation’s total air pollution stems from small engines, in particular lawn care

equipment. Furthermore, gas powered lawn mowers consume 580 million gallons of gasoline annually, and 25% to 35% of that fuel escapes unburned into the atmosphere -- polluting the air we breathe and the water we drink.

Today there is another option: electric lawn mowers. Electric mowers are 50-75% quieter than a standard gas mower, are self-propelled, easily adjust to the desired cutting height, and are much less harmful to the environment. The Department of the Interior's [Green Seal program](#) (an independent, nonprofit, standard-setting organization) estimates that electric mowers emit 3,300 times less hydrocarbons, 5,000 times less CO, one fifth as much NOx, and less than half the CO2 as gas engines.

Electric mowers will save you money and body aches, too! While the average initial purchase cost is about twice that of a power mower, you will save almost \$70 a year in fuel, oil, and engine tune-ups. Plus your aching back will appreciate the benefit of instant start-ups (no more pulling a cord over and over), and your ears (and your neighbors) will love the quiet engine. Today's electric mowers are available in cordless models, and can last up to 45 minutes on one charge to make your mowing tasks even easier. For more information, see the [complete Green Seal report](#).

So next time you are in the market for a new lawn mower, remember the advantages of electric powered machines. You and your neighbors will enjoy the peace and quiet, as well as the smell of freshly mown grass instead of burning gas!

Article by: [Andy Finch](#), Clean Air Lawn Care of MA

Lawn Mowing Service – the Clean Air Way!

Love the idea of clean and quiet electric mowers, but want the convenience of a lawn mowing service? Now you can have both with [Clean Air Lawn Care](#) of Massachusetts.

This innovative company is the only one of its kind in MA and offers weekly electric lawn mowing service (residential or commercial). They use solar panels attached to their vehicles in lieu of an electrical outlet, thus eliminating almost all harmful emissions. On cloudy days and to offset office electricity and fuel for vehicles, they even purchase wind energy credits to stay 100% carbon neutral.

Mention "Greenscapes" when you sign up for weekly service with Clean Air Lawn Care of Massachusetts, and receive your first two mows free (up to \$180 savings). Please contact [Andy Finch](#) at 978-412-5203 for more details.

Lawn Mower Maintenance

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

- **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.
- **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.

15% Discount on Greenscapes Plants

Looking for something that is lower maintenance and perhaps more attractive than grass? Check out our list of [Greenscapes recommended plants!](#) Memorial Day weekend is traditionally when most of us get serious about planting our gardens. Many local nurseries generously offering a 15% discount on in-stock drought-tolerant and low maintenance plants listed in the Greenscapes Guide (see the list below for partnering nurseries in your region). Please note that not all of our recommended plants are available this time of year, and that individual nurseries may have additional restrictions on the Greenscapes discount).

South Shore nurseries offering a 15% discount on [Greenscapes plants](#):

- A.J. Tomasi Nursery in Pembroke -- 299 Oak Street; 781-826-7200
- First Parish Nursery Centre in Scituate -- 405 First Parish Road; 781-545-1221
- The Gardeners' Choice in Pembroke (formerly Flowerland Home and Garden) --408 Washington St.; 781-826-4010.
- Kennedy's Country Gardens in Scituate -- 85 CJ Cushing Hwy; 781-545-1266
- Morrison's Home & Garden in Plymouth -- 90 Long Pond Road; 508-746-0970

North Shore nurseries offering 15% discount on [Greenscapes plants](#):

- Chapman's Greenhouse – Beverly, 58 Hart St.; 978-927-0153
- Harbor Garden Center – Salisbury, 53 Bridge Rd.; 978-462-8200
- Marblehead Garden Center – Marblehead, 164 West Shore Drive; 781-631-8558
- Corliss Bros. – Ipswich, 31 Essex Rd.; 978-356-5422
- Northeast Nursery – Peabody, 234 Newbury St. (Rt. 1 South); 978-535-6550
- Nunan Florist and Greenhouse – Georgetown, 269 Central St.; 978-352-8172
- Paisley Farm and Greenhouse – W. Boxford, 189 Washington St.; 978-352-2332
- Wolf Hill Home & Garden Center – Ipswich only, 60 Turnpike Rd. (Rte 1); 978-356-6342

Free Greenscapes Lawnsign

Show your support of the Greenscapes program and pride in your beautiful landscape -- if you are following at least five of the recommendations in the [Greenscapes Guide](#) you qualify for a FREE lawn sign! Please email [Julie Uhler](#) to request a lawn sign and post it proudly in your lawn or garden. Some of the principles of the Greenscapes program require a change in consumer attitude, and your display of support will encourage others to become a Greenscaper too!

The Greenscapes Program

The 2007 Greenscapes program is a multi-partner outreach effort sponsored by the [Massachusetts Bay Estuary Association](#), [Massachusetts Bays Program](#), [North and South Rivers Watershed Association](#), [Eight Towns & the Bay Committee](#), [Salem Sound Coastwatch](#), [Ipswich River Watershed Association](#), and many other [sponsors](#) and [supporters](#). Participating communities in the 2007 Greenscapes program include: Andover, Beverly, Boxford, Cohasset, Danvers, Duxbury, Essex, Georgetown, Gloucester, Hamilton, Hanover, Hingham and Hull (Aquarion Water Company), Ipswich, Kingston, Manchester-by-the-Sea, Marshfield, Middleton, Newbury, Newburyport, Norwell, Peabody, Pembroke, Pinehills Water Company (Plymouth), Plymouth, Salem, Salisbury, Scituate, Topsfield, Wenham and Weymouth. Coalition partners have also received generous grant assistance for the 2007 program from the [EPA Targeted Watershed Grant for Ipswich River Restoration](#), the Louisa Conrad Bequest of the North Shore Garden Club, MA Department of Environmental Protection, Massachusetts Environmental Trust, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

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