



Inside This Issue:

- » [Happy Spring!](#)
- » [2008 Greenscapes Guide is Here!](#)
- » [Free Greenscapes Workshop Series](#)
- » [Mid-Spring Lawn Care Calendar](#)
- » [Organic Crabgrass Control](#)
- » [Tip of the Month: Overseed Your Lawn](#)
- » [Welcome PVPC and Connecticut River Watershed!](#)
- » [Thanks for Taking Our Survey](#)
- » [Earth Day is April 22nd](#)

Happy Spring!

Spring is always an exciting time for Greenscapers and a delight to the senses. Who can resist the feeling of warm sunshine on our backs and new grass under our feet, the smell of new plants and warm soil, the sounds of birds and other new life in our yards?

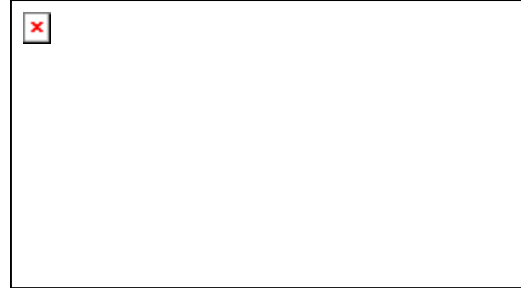
Now for the fifth year, along with the earliest blooms and the celebration of Earth Day, comes the official launch of the 2008 Greenscapes Massachusetts program. The 2008 Greenscapes Guide is ready, our free workshops are lined up, and we've got lots of new special offers and other goodies waiting for you. Keep reading to find out more, and be sure to check out our newly updated

website, www.Greenscapes.org.

The [Greenscapes Coalition](#) wishes you the best for another great growing season, and we look forward to providing you with new ideas, suggestions, and resources for a beautiful yard that protects our water.

Happy spring!
~ Wendy Garpow, Editor
Massachusetts Bays Estuary Association

2008 Greenscapes Guide is Here



The 2008 Greenscapes Guide is a 20-page resource that contains everything you ever wanted to know about Greenscaping, including lots of tips, special offers, and other helpful suggestions for a beautiful yard that protects our water. [Download a complete copy now](#) or visit www.Greenscapes.org

to view the entire contents online.

During the 2008 growing season, the [Greenscapes Coalition](#) will distribute more than 100,000 copies of the Greenscapes Guide throughout [participating communities](#) in the North Shore, South Shore, and Connecticut River Watershed regions. The printing and distribution of these Guides was generously paid for by the 2008 [Community Partners](#).

Coming soon to a mailbox near you! This year, almost 80,000 single-family households in the [participating communities](#) of the North Shore and Connecticut River regions will be directly mailed a copy of the Guide. Be on the lookout in early May!

Want a copy? [Download a complete copy now!](#) Limited printed copies of the Guide are also available through our partnering organizations ([contact the Coalition partner nearest you](#)). Later this spring, you can also find one at the Town Halls and public libraries of our [participating communities](#).

Free Greenscapes Workshop Series

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](#).

South Shore:

- The Benefits of Plants and Landscaping (May 28, Hanover)

- Tame Your Water-Consuming Irrigation System (May 5, Hanover)
- Using Fewer Pesticides by Knowledgeable Plant Selection (May 12, Hanover)
- Landscape Design Ideas for Success (May 19, Hanover)

North Shore:

- How and Why to Use Native Plants in Your Garden (May 3, Peabody)
- Soaking Up the Rain (May 10, Peabody)
- Lawn Care Basics and How to Phase Out Chemicals (May 13, Topsfield)
- Easy Composting for Healthy Landscapes (May 20, Topsfield)

Connecticut River Watershed: stay tuned to www.Greenscapes.org for details coming soon!

Mid-Spring Lawn Care Calendar

Here's a handy 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](#).

- [Test soil](#)
 - Topdress with [compost, lime and other soil amendments](#) if soil test indicates they are needed
 - Rake to remove thatch buildup, add old grass to [compost bin/pile](#)
 - Apply [corn gluten](#) for crabgrass control **before** the forsythia blooms (NOT at same time as overseeding)
 - [Overseed](#) to crowd out weeds
 - Tune mower and set blade height to 3" high ([learn more](#))
 - Conduct [Thumb Test](#) and sharpen mower blade at least every 10 hours of mowing
 - Leave clippings on the lawn for [free fertilizer](#)
 - Aerate and water [compost pile](#)
 - No need to water lawn in average years
-

Organic Crabgrass Control

Was there too much crabgrass in your yard last year?

IF the forsythia hasn't yet bloomed in your area, NOW is the time to spread corn gluten to prevent weeds later in the season. Corn gluten is an organic "weed and feed" -- that is, a pre-emergent herbicide that contains 10% nitrogen (fertilizer). It keeps weed seeds from germinating, so don't spread it at the same time as grass seed (wait at least 6 weeks). You can find corn gluten at most of the [Greenscapes partner nurseries](#). One brand is [Cockadoodledoo](#), which is even available to [buy online](#). Other brands are available through online organic

companies such as [Gardeners Supply Company](#) or [Clean Air Gardening](#).

If the forsythia in your area has already bloomed, the weeds have already sprouted so pre-emergent herbicides won't work now– but don't worry, you can still take action now to prevent weeds later by overseeding (see below).

Tip of the Month: Overseed Your Lawn

Overseeding simply means spreading grass seed over your existing lawn – it's a small investment of effort now for a beautiful lawn all season. It's quick, easy, and inexpensive, and best of all, it's one of the very best ways to control weeds. These cooler temps and wetter weather make it the perfect time to overseed – just follow these six steps:

1. **Buy.** Regardless of what type of lawn you inherited when you moved in, now is your chance to choose the best seed for a great looking lawn. Choose a drought-tolerant variety that has a high percentage of **turf-type tall fescues**. Several manufacturers now carry fescue grass mixes – compare labels and buy the blend with the highest percentage purity and germination ratings. Great grass seeds are produced by the Massachusetts Nursery and Landscape Association, as they select the finest seeds that are best suited to Massachusetts' climate. MNLA seeds are carried by several [Greenscapes partner nurseries](#), including A.J.Tomasi Nurseries (Pembroke), Kennedy's Country Gardens (Scituate), and Nunan's Florist & Greenhouses (Georgetown).
2. **Rake.** Give your lawn a good raking to get rid of the dead grass. This will help the new seeds to grow and allow the air, sunlight and rainwater to give your existing lawn new life. This is the hardest part -- but it's good exercise and you can even recycle the old grass in your [compost bin or pile](#). If you don't rake, the seeds might not get in contact with the soil and they will be food for the birds.
3. **Compost.** For best results, topdress the lawn with ¼" of compost (or more in bare spots) before overseeding -- but only if your soil test indicates you need to add nutrients. This will help the seeds germinate, take root and grow quickly. (You did get your soil tested last month, right?!)
4. **Spread.** Evenly distribute the grass seeds using a mechanical spreader. Set it at a light setting and go over your lawn several times for the best coverage. Some people find this part fun and very satisfying.
5. **Water.** Give the new seeds a good drink of water to get them started. The seedlings will need to stay moist for a couple of weeks or they will die. Usually in the spring, Mother Nature will take care of this, but if not, give the overseeded areas of your lawn a quick drink every few days.
6. **Repeat.** Overseed annually in the spring and fall for best results.

Welcome PVPC and Connecticut River Watershed

Greenscapes Massachusetts continues to grow -- we extend a warm welcome to the newest member of the Greenscapes Coalition, the [Pioneer Valley Planning Commission](#). Through the generous financial assistance of an EPA Targeted Watershed Grant, the PVPC is piloting the Greenscapes Massachusetts program in three communities in the Connecticut River watershed region – Agawam, Easthampton, and Ludlow. This effort is aptly being led by [Anne Capra](#), Principal Planner at PVPC. We hope Greenscapes is a success with our new friends in western Massachusetts, and that in time the program will include all of PVPC's 43 member communities.

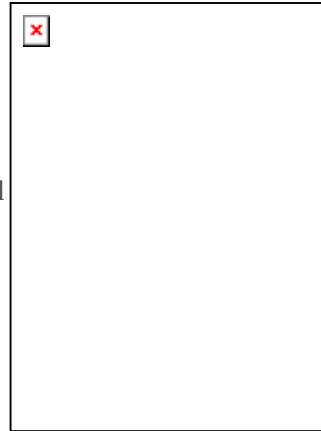
Thanks for Taking Our Survey

Almost 200 of you kindly gave your time and valuable input through our Greenscapes survey last month. In addition to getting lots of great ideas, we were excited to learn that so many people have changed the way they take care of their yards to help protect our water.

More than 2/3 of you practice at least one Greenscapes recommendation in your mowing, watering, and other yard maintenance practices. A whopping 80% of you have entirely stopped or almost entirely stopped using synthetic yard chemicals! And more than half of you have already seen a significant reduction in your water use.

Most of you said that the biggest challenges to adopting more Greenscaping practices are your (1) limited time and (2) difficulty in finding some of the recommended products and services. We want to make Greenscaping as "quick and easy" as possible for you -- so now our "Tip of the Month" column will include step-by-step actions with more links and references for giving you the info you need to do the job right. Check out this month's article above and [let us know what you think!](#)

Congratulations to the lucky winner of the rain barrel that was generously donated by [New England Rain Barrel](#). New England Rain Barrel is a [2008 Greenscapes Underwriter](#).



Earth Day is April 22nd

Earth Day is a time to celebrate the progress we have made in repairing our environment and reflect on the work that still needs to be done. Almost 500 million people in over 180 countries around the world celebrate Earth Day every year. Learn more about the history of Earth Day and how you can help protect our air, water, and land at www.EarthDay.gov.

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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