What do I do instead?

Relax, accept a few weeds. A lawn with 10% to 20% weeds is still healthy and looks good. Clover stays green all year, fertilizes the soil, mows well and supports butterflies and birds.

Pull or spot spray the worst weeds and ignore the others. There are cool tools to pop them out easily without stooping. Pull weeds before they go to seed.

Use organic or slow-release fertilizers instead of quick-release fertilizers. The best time to fertilize is September.

Mow your lawn higher, to two inches (one inch for bentgrass) to crowd out weeds and leave clippings on the lawn to fertilize naturally.

Water lawns deeply but infrequently to promote deep roots. Water about one inch of water per week in summer; less in spring and fall.

Overseed thin areas in spring and fall to crowd out weeds. Rake to expose the soil, spread seed, and cover with 1/8 to 1/4 inch of compost or soil.

Shrink your lawn where grass is hard to grow, such as on steep slopes, shady areas or near streams and lakes; consider native plant alternatives.

Natural Lawn and Garden Hotline: 206-633-0224, or e-mail *info@lawnandgardenhotline.org* or visit www.govlink.org/hazwaste/house/yard/lawn/.

Alternate formats available

206-296-6600 TTY Relay: 711

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HHW-LAWN-6 (00) rev. 6/07
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Produced by

King County

as part of the **Local Hazardous Waste Management Program in King County**

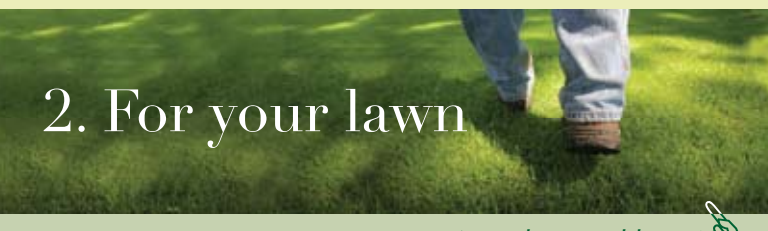
4 reasons to kick the weed & feed habit!

1. For your wallet

Weed and feed and turf building products are overkill. Many professional landscapers don't use these products because it wastes money to spread chemicals where they aren't needed, especially if the goal is to kill a few dandelions.

Did you know? Because of its harmful effects, it is illegal to apply weed and feed products with 2,4-D on lawns more than two times per year. Read the label.

Try a natural organic fertilizer to feed your lawn and soil.



2. For your lawn

Actual natural lawn!

Lush lawns grow on healthy soil inhabited by millions of soil-dwelling creatures. Earthworms, bacteria and fungi help water and air penetrate to roots, battle disease, nourish plants, and recycle thatch into nutrients that the grass can use.

Overusing pesticides (weed and bug killers) and quick-release fertilizers kills these natural caretakers and increases lawn disease and thatch. Unhealthy soil makes it harder to grow a green lawn without relying on chemicals.

If you want a lush lawn, you need healthy soil and worms.

3. For kids and pets… and you

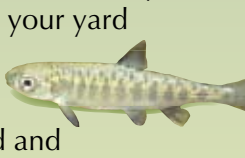
Children and pets are at highest risk from pesticides. Their small size makes them more sensitive to toxic chemicals, and where they play makes them more likely to contact pesticides used in the home or yard. If you are pregnant, avoid using garden chemicals.

Half of the 98 pesticide and health studies reviewed by the American College of Toxicology found a higher cancer risk and other health problems in families that use yard and garden pesticides.

For children, pesticide effects may last a lifetime.

4. For streams and lakes

Three common weed and feed pesticides have been found in many King County urban and suburban streams: 2,4-D; MCPP and dicamba. Even if you don't live near water, chemicals from your yard can travel through storm drains to streams, lakes, or Puget Sound.



Quick-release fertilizers in most weed and feed products add a big dose of nutrients to the lawn. These dissolve easily and can wash into water bodies, increasing algae growth in lakes, using up oxygen needed by fish, and causing smelly summer beaches.

Slow release, organic fertilizers have staying power.

Find out how to kick the habit…