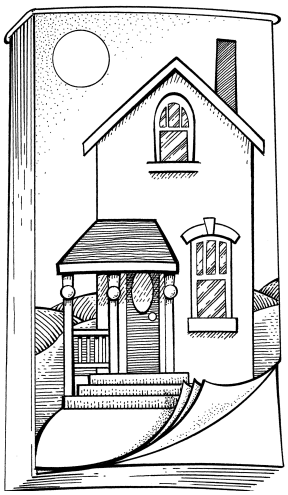
Yard and Garden Care

How it Affects Your Health and Environment



Assessment 1:

Assessing your yard and garden care

The assessment table below will help you identify potential environmental risks related to your yard and garden maintenance practices. For each question, indicate your risk level in the right-hand column. Although some choices may not correspond exactly to your situation, choose the response that best fits. Refer to the accompanying fact sheet if you need more information to complete the table.

Responding to risks

Your goal is to lower your risks. Complete the action checklist on the following page to help you make plans to reduce your risks.

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	LOW RISK	MEDIUM RISK	HIGH RISK	YOUR RISK
Fertilizers	Soil is tested for nutrients, and fertilizer is used as recommended.	Soil is tested, but more fertilizer is used than recommended.	Soil is not tested, and fertilizer used is unknown or excessive.	❑ Low ❑ Medium ❑ High
Pesticides	Nonchemical or low-toxicity methods (such as integrated pest management) are used to control identified pests.	Chemicals are used according to label instructions.	Chemicals are used without regard to label instructions or conditions. Pests not identified.	❑ Low ❑ Medium ❑ High
Lawn (turf) type and maintenance	Turfgrass is suited to soil type, available sunlight and climate. Grass is pest-resistant and mowed to the proper height.	Turfgrass is suited to the site but is well-fertilized and mowed short.	Grass type is not suited to available light, soil type or climate. Grass is pest-prone and mowed too short.	❑ Low ❑ Medium ❑ High
Ground cover and other plantings	Ground covers, flowers, trees and shrubs are planted to reduce soil erosion. Plantings resist insects and disease.	A slow-spreading ground cover is used.	A hilly landscape or lack of ground cover causes soil erosion. Plants require insect- and disease-fighting chemicals to survive.	❑ Low ❑ Medium ❑ High

Yard and garden care, *continued*.				
	LOW RISK	**MEDIUM RISK**	**HIGH RISK**	**YOUR RISK**
Composting	The compost pile is well-maintained: It is aerated regularly and contains yard waste, vegetable food scraps, and a nitrogen source such as manure.	The compost pile is poorly maintained: It is not aerated or lacks the proper mix of materials. Dog, cat and other pet manures are added to the pile.	The compost pile is poorly maintained: It contains excessive high-nitrogen material and is not turned regularly. The pile is less than 50 feet from a shallow well or surface water.	❑ Low ❑ Medium ❑ High
Water requirements of plants	Grass, flowers, trees and shrubs are able to survive with normal rainfall.	Landscape plants require light to moderate watering.	Heavy watering is required to keep the lawn and other plants alive.	❑ Low ❑ Medium ❑ High
Water methods	Watering is done in the morning (2 a.m. to 9 a.m.) only as needed. Low water-use devices (like soaker hoses) are used. The sprinkler system is on manual control.	Watering is excessive. (For example, the sprinkler is left unattended, and much water lands on the pavement.)	Watering is done during the heat of the day. The sprinkler system is used daily without regard to weather conditions. There is excessive water runoff.	❑ Low ❑ Medium ❑ High

Action checklist

In the checklist below, or on a separate sheet of paper, write all medium- and high-risk practices you identified in the assessment table. For each risk, write down the improvements you plan to make. Use recommendations from this chapter and other resources to decide on actions you are likely to complete. A target date will keep you on schedule. You don't have to do everything at once, but try to eliminate the most serious risks as soon as you can. Often it helps to tackle the inexpensive actions first.

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Write all high and medium risks below.	**What can you do to reduce the risk?**	**Set a target date for action.**
Sample: Fertilizers applied but soil has never been tested.	Find laboratory that does soil testing. Take samples and send them to lab.	One week from today: March 15

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