

What is a SMART Lawn?

- A lawn that is beautiful because it's healthy.
- A lawn that makes the best use of two valuable resources—your time and money.
- A lawn that is environmentally responsible.
- A lawn that protects your community's streams, lakes, and ponds from nutrient and sediment pollution.
- A lawn that does its part to reduce the amounts of nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment entering the Chesapeake Bay.
- A lawn that helps the Commonwealth of Virginia meet its "pollution diet" requirements for the Bay.
- A lawn that protects water quality in a watershed.

What is a Watershed?

A watershed is an area of land that drains to a lake, river, wetland, or other waterway. When it rains, water travels over the land before entering a small stream, then a larger waterway, and ultimately an ocean. Together, land and water make up a watershed system.

No matter where you live in Virginia you are part of one the state's nine major watersheds. Nearly two-thirds of Virginia drains into the Chesapeake Bay.

Healthy watersheds are a vital component of a healthy environment. Watersheds act as a filter for runoff that occurs from precipitation and snowmelt, providing clean water for drinking, irrigation, and industry.

The best way to protect our water resources is to understand and manage them on a watershed basis. Human activities as well as natural events that occur in a watershed can affect water quality throughout the entire system.

Lawns and Watersheds

Fertilizer runoff from lawns and landscapes is a component of non-point source pollution. This type of runoff results from the misuse of lawn fertilizers and other chemicals. Areas with thin turf or bare soil can contribute another type of pollutant—sediment.

Healthy lawns that have deep root systems capture nutrients and hold soil in place. One of best ways to protect water is to protect the soil in your lawn and landscape.

SMART Lawns



A Residential Lawn Care Program to Protect Water Quality

Virginia Cooperative Extension

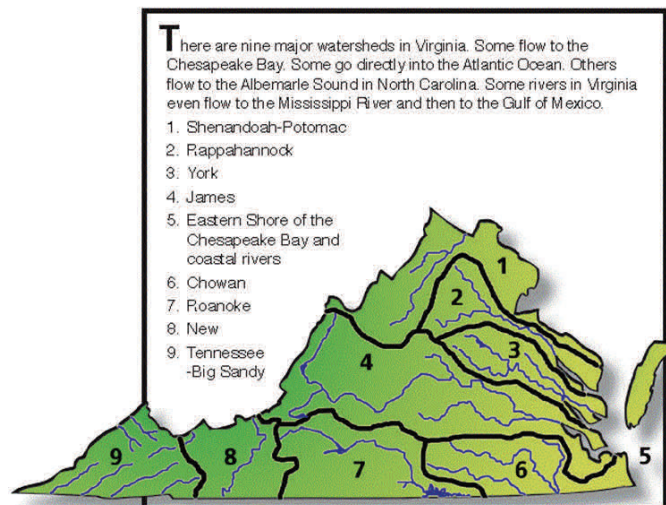
Henrico County Office

8600 Dixon Powers Drive; PO Box 90775

Henrico, VA 23273-0775

804-501-5160

<http://offices.ext.vt.edu/henrico/>



Introduction

Improving the quality of a home lawn requires knowledge about five basic aspects of turf management. That's why we have based our lawn care program on five "SMART" steps:



What to Expect from the SMART Lawns Program

A Master Gardener volunteer will come to your home to collect a lawn soil sample and measure your total lawn area. Once we receive the results of your soil analysis, we will formulate a Nutrient Management Plan that will tell you the right kind of fertilizer to apply to your lawn at the right rate and at the right time. Lawn aeration combined with proper maintenance strategies will help correct weed and disease issues, improving the health and appearance of your lawn.

What to Expect from Your Lawn (and Yourself)

The overall quality and appearance of your lawn is very much dependent upon the level of maintenance you intend to provide. The following chart can help you determine your expectations for the quality and maintenance of your lawn.

SMART Lawns Expectations

Quality Expectations	Maintenance Levels
High Quality Turf Deep green color Manicured appearance Thick, dense turf Few to no weeds	High Maintenance Sunny to mostly sunny exposure. Regular irrigation to maintain active growth. Optimum fall fertilization. Frequent mowing (2x per week) to meet max of 1/3 blade removal rule. Clippings returned to lawn. Multiple grassy and broadleaf weed control applications. Preventative or early curative treatments for insect & disease pressure. Aerate every year and overseed every year. Overseed as needed to maintain dense coverage.
Moderate to Good Turf Quality Good green color Mostly dense, some areas thinner Some weeds present (<15%)	Regular Maintenance Sunny to mostly sunny exposure. Rarely irrigated once established. Good fertilization program. Weekly mowing to meet max of 1/3 blade removal rule. Clippings returned to lawn. Grassy weed control in spring; spot applications for broadleaf weeds. Insect and disease pests addressed only if pressure is extreme. Aerate every two to three years and overseed as needed.
Acceptable Turf Quality Moderate green color Moderate density Noticeable weeds (20-30%)	Reduced Maintenance Sun to partial shade exposure. No irrigation. Moderate fertilization. Mowing every 10-14 days to meet max of 1/3 blade removal rule. No weed control anticipated.

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