

# GREEN

## PESTICIDE-FREE, HEALTHY YARDS

By SUMMER BRACEY

If you've always used chemical pesticides, you might be wondering how the City of Kelowna's pesticide use regulation by-law will affect you. Have no fear; there are lots of simple things you can do to replace those harmful chemicals.

The key to a naturally pest-free yard in 2010, is using proper horticultural practices.

The best prevention against weeds is a dense and healthy lawn. Weeds prefer dry, compacted soils with low fertility. Improve your soil and you will create an inhospitable environment for weeds to grow, making them weak and less competitive with your preferred plants.

**Start with good quality soil and spread nutrient-rich compost.** Provide enough good soil for grass, plants and trees to grow good roots. Use mulch and local products, like Ogogrow, which increase moisture retention and feed your plants naturally.

**Choose proper plantings for our environment.** Kelowna is a dry, semi-arid city, so keep that in mind when picking your grass and plantings. Look for disease and drought resistant grass, plants and trees. For more information, consult one of the many websites or local landscaping professionals versed in Kelowna's conditions and ask about xeriscaping.



A good quality compost and beneficial insects will help to naturally prevent and combat yard pests



Marcia Browne, Glenmore Landfill Environmental Technician, checks the temperature of the compost.

**Spread grass seeds over the existing lawn and replace high traffic areas with paving stones.** A thick lawn is the best prevention against weeds. Use appropriate grass seeds to cover bare areas or your whole lawn. Spread before rain in mid-April or September.

**Aerate to reduce soil compaction.** Where the lawn is extensively used, the soil becomes hard and unfavourable to grass. Reduce this compaction with a core aerator.

**Mow high and mow often.** Most lawns perform better when mowed six to nine centimetres high (2.5 to 3.5 inches). When cut too short, the grass is weaker and less competitive against weeds. Ensure the mower has sharp blades and leave the clippings on the lawn.

**Provide proper watering for your area.** The Glenmore area has primarily clay soils, while the hillside areas are known for sandy, gravel soils. For these types of soil, it is better to water in short, frequent bursts, which prevents pooling, excessive run-off and evaporation. In places where the soil is more conducive to moisture retention, like Old Glenmore, it is best to water long and less frequently, allowing the water to penetrate to the root level, where it is less susceptible to evaporation and more likely to encourage deep root growth. Keep in mind that grass naturally goes brown during the summer months.

**Call a professional before a pest problem gets out of control.** Certified applicators are exempt from the bylaw as they undergo special training to minimize the impact of their spraying and are encouraged to use safer, healthier alternatives.

For more information about the City's pesticide bylaw and keeping your spaces naturally healthy, visit the "Pesticide" page at Kelowna.ca/environment, email enviro@kelowna.ca or call 250 469-8500.



Tracy Guidi, City of Kelowna Sustainability Coordinator, shows off the pesticide-free lawns at the Parkinson Recreation Centre

CONTACT  
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**RELAX!**  
**IT'S JUST A LAWN WEED!**

City of Kelowna

You don't need pesticides to grow a healthy lawn. In fact, a healthy natural lawn is more resistant to pests, drought and other conditions. Kelowna's pesticide bylaw regulates the use of pesticides for non-essential purposes.

250 469-8500 | [kelowna.ca/environment](http://kelowna.ca/environment)