

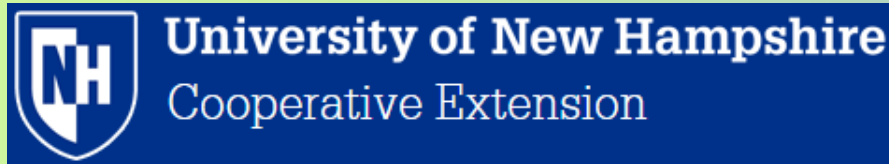
Landscaping for Water Quality in the Lakes Region

MARKETING WATER QUALITY FRIENDLY SERVICES - MARCH 2018

Julia Peterson

N.H. Sea Grant and UNH Cooperative Extension

Sunapee, NH



“I attended this two day training and all I got was....”



Is there a market for water quality-friendly landscaping services?

1. Look at some relevant studies and their conclusions
2. Think about applying those conclusions to specific markets
3. Capture some ideas for a marketing plan to promote WQ-friendly services

A Poll of Peers:

Northern New England Nursery Conference March 2015



University of New Hampshire
Cooperative Extension



NORTHERN NEW ENGLAND NURSERY CONFERENCE

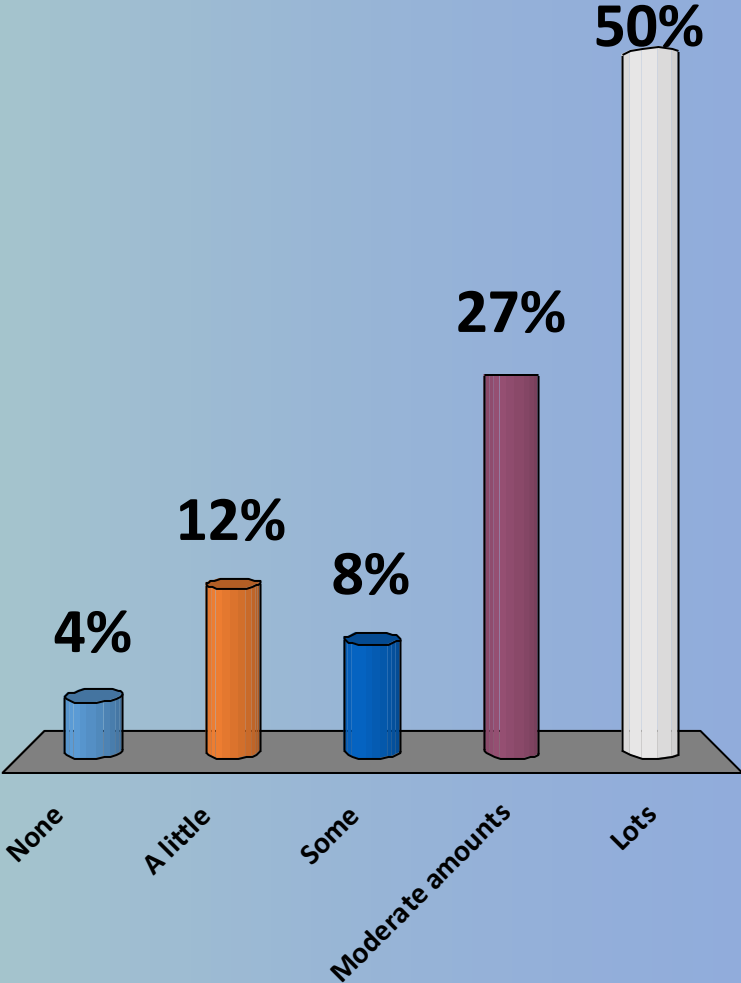


FRIDAY, MARCH 6, 2015
9:00AM TO 3:30PM

SEACOAST SCIENCE CENTER
570 Ocean Blvd
Rye, NH 03870

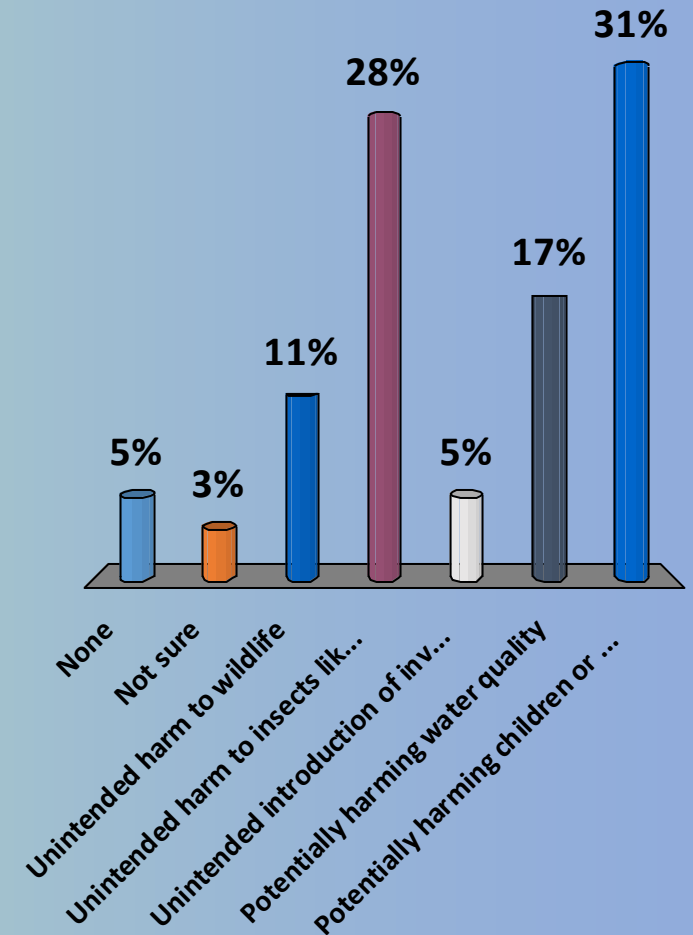
How much demand are you noticing for more environmentally friendly products, advice or services?

- A. None
- B. A little
- C. Some
- D. Moderate amounts
- E. Lots



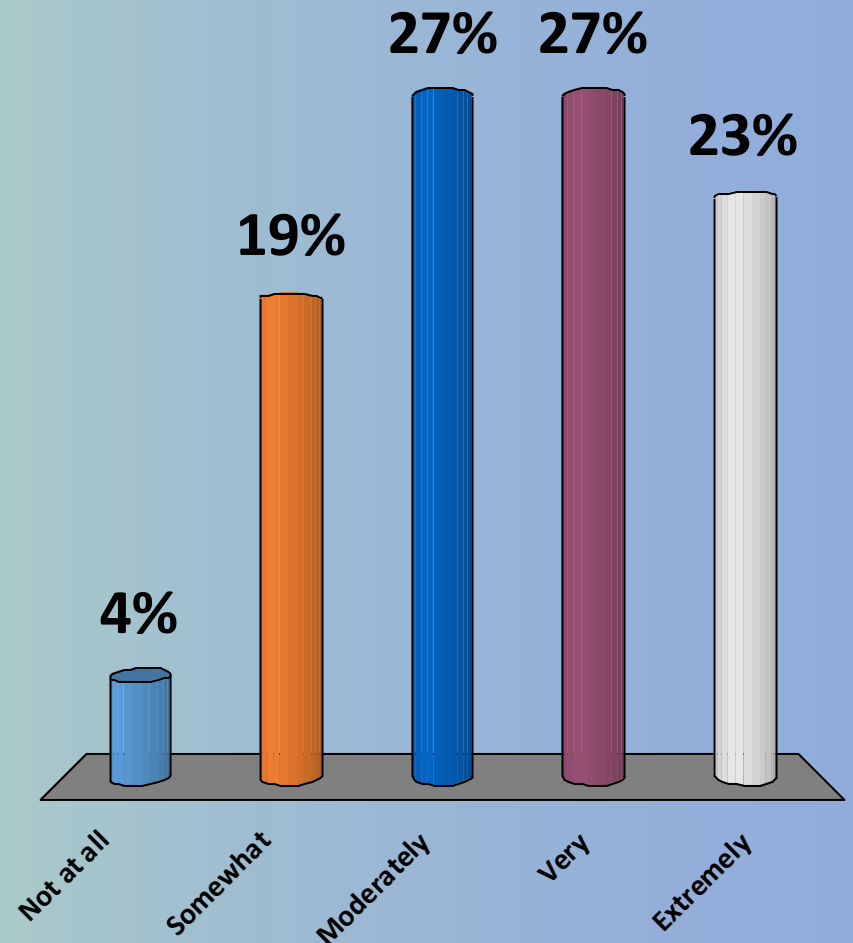
What environmental/health concerns do your clients have related to yard care? *Check up to 3 responses.*

- A. None
- B. Not sure
- C. Unintended harm to wildlife
- D. Unintended harm to insects like bees or butterflies
- E. Unintended introduction of invasive plants species
- F. Potentially harming water quality
- G. Potentially harming children or pets



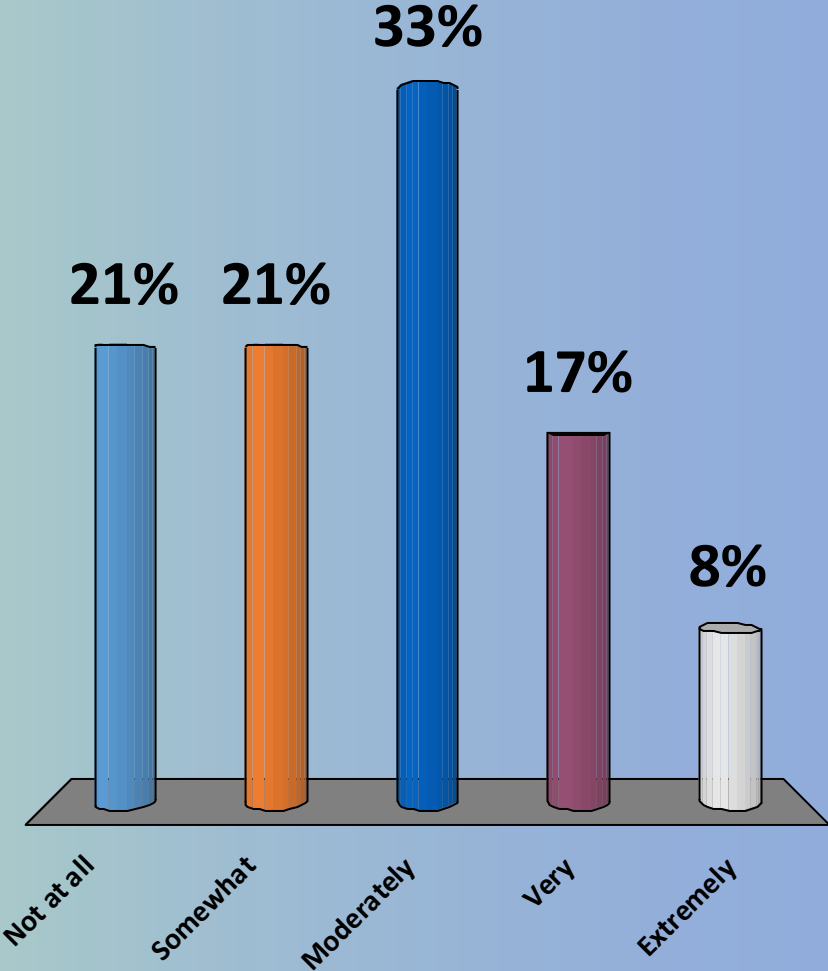
How confident are you in being able to provide water quality-friendly yard care services or recommendations for customers?

- A. Not at all
- B. Somewhat
- C. Moderately
- D. Very
- E. Extremely



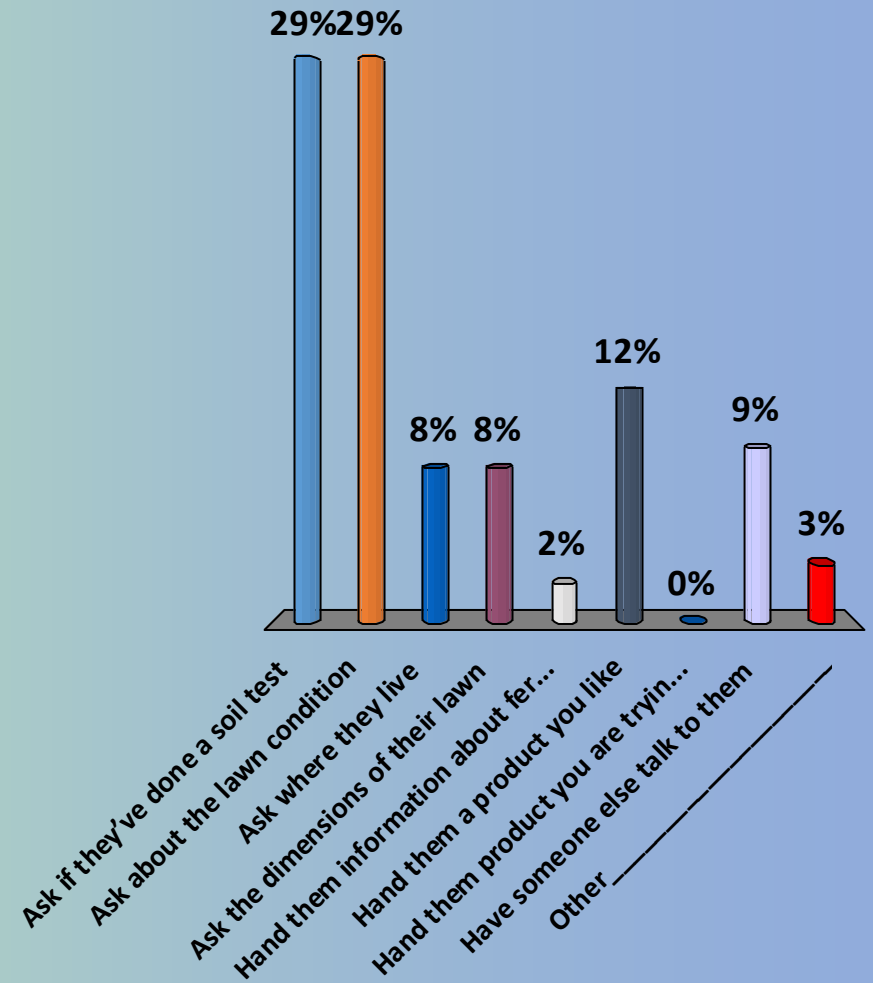
How confident are you that your staff can provide water quality-friendly yard care services or recommendations for customers?

- A. Not at all
- B. Somewhat
- C. Moderately
- D. Very
- E. Extremely



How do you currently respond to customers' requests for advice on lawn fertilizers? *Choose up to 3 responses.*

- A. Ask if they've done a soil test
- B. Ask about the lawn condition
- C. Ask where they live
- D. Ask the dimensions of their lawn
- E. Hand them information about fertilizers
- F. Hand them a product you like
- G. Hand them product you are trying to get rid of
- H. Have someone else talk to them
- I. Other _____



What Does This Mean for Your Work?

- **Demand is up**

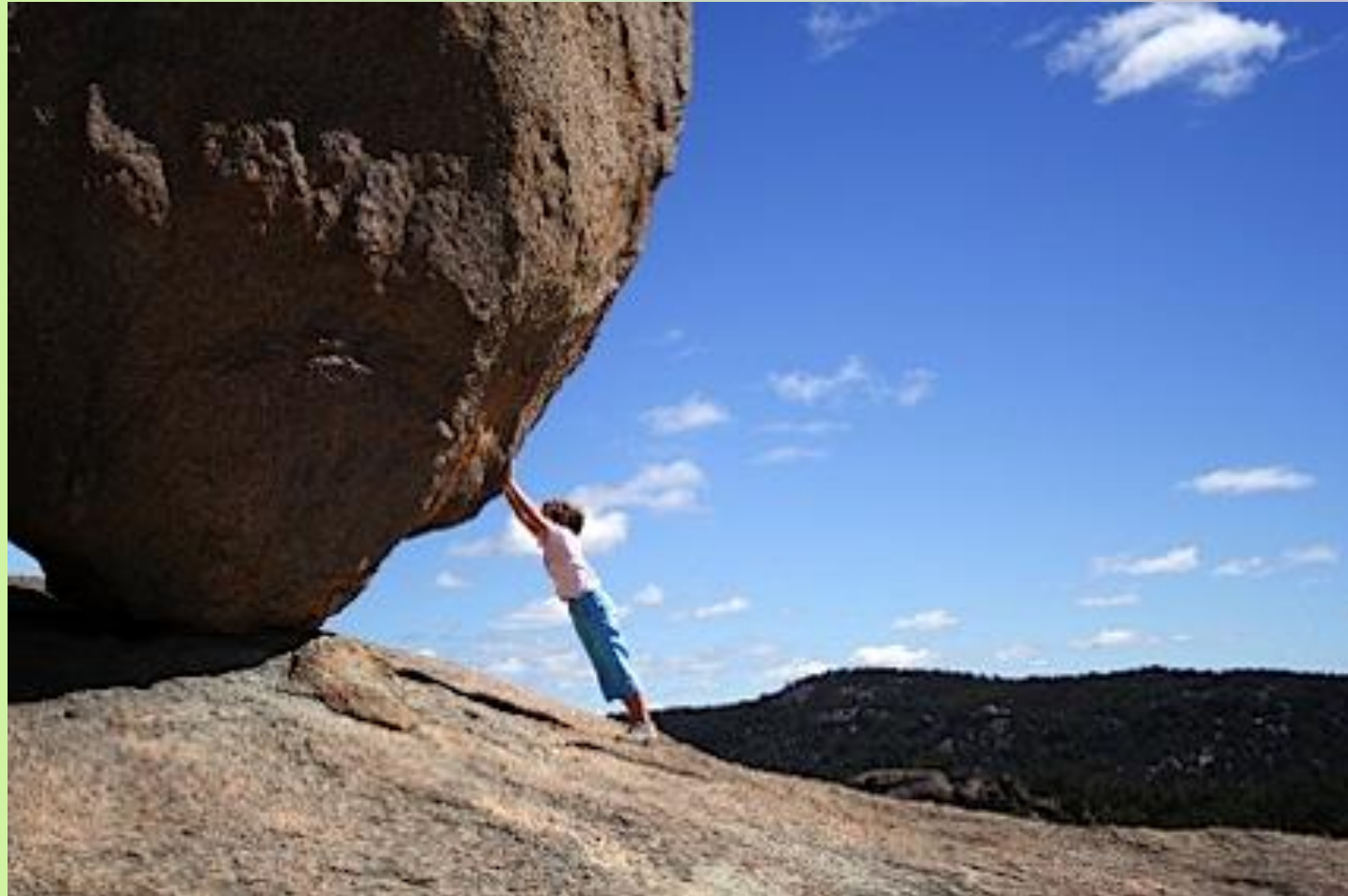
(Residential and regulatory drivers (MS4) are probably contributing.)

- **Environmental and ecological concerns exist**

- **Knowledge, skill and confidence of people in the industry to accommodate this demand vary**

Behavior Is Complex

Changing Behavior is Very Challenging



Primary Influences on Behavior?



What Potential Clients Think, Feel And Do About Water Quality And Landscaping Issues

- Great Bay study

NH Citizens Value and Use Water in Many Ways – 2013

- New England study

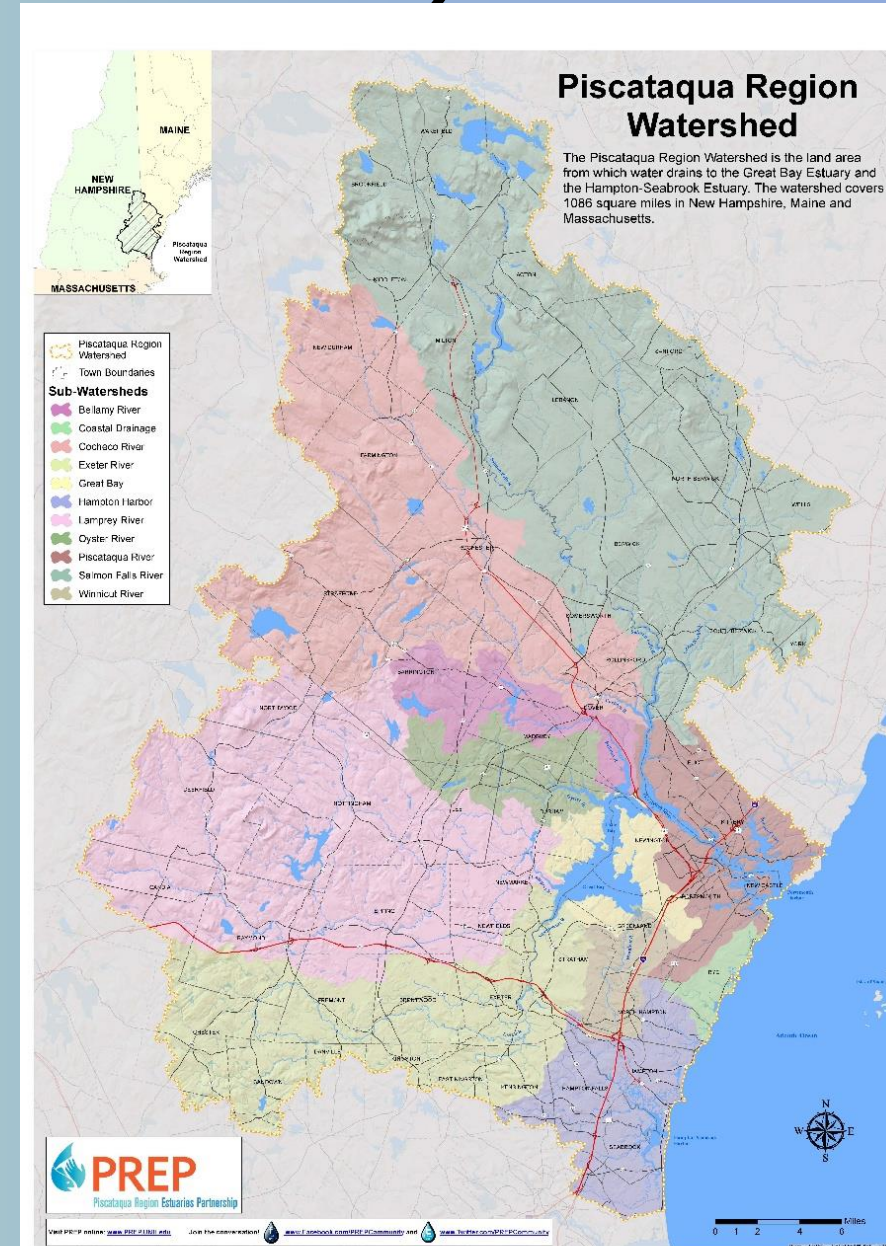
Changing Homeowner's Lawn Care Behavior to Reduce Nutrient Losses in New England's Urbanizing Watersheds – 2008

- Lake Ripley study

Understanding Barriers and Incentives to Building Rain Gardens - 2007

NH Citizens Value and Use Water in Many Ways – 2014

- Carried out by Plymouth State University and Piscataqua Region Estuaries Partnership (PREP)
- Funded by EPSCoR & PREP
- Surveyed **406** residents statewide with **310** Piscataqua Region residents in oversample
- 10 minute phone interviews



Key Findings – How NH Residents Use and Value Water

- A MARKET EXISTS
 - **90%** are concerned with the level of pollution in local streams, rivers, lakes and bays.
- RESIDENTS RECOGNIZE LAND-WATER CONNECTION
 - A majority of residents (**58%**) indicate that they know actions on their property can have an impact on overall water in the community.
- WATER QUALITY MATTERS
 - **80%** understand the connection between clean water resources and economic stability of their community
- THEY'RE WILLING TO ACT, especially if incentivized
 - **83%** agree that they would be willing to take action to reduce stormwater pollution, especially if it would keep water and sewer bills down.
- THEY'RE OPEN TO INCENTIVES
 - **86%** would support a water friendly lawn campaign for discounts & coupons for home & garden stores & services

Changing Homeowner's Lawn Care Behavior to Reduce Nutrient Losses in New England's Urbanizing Watersheds - 2008

- Carried out by Universities of New Hampshire, Maine, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Vermont Cooperative Extension and Plymouth State University
- Funded by USDA National Water Program
- Focused on **do-it-yourselfers** in urbanizing communities in New England – interviews and survey

Green Grass & Clear Water
Water quality friendly lawn care and fertilizer recommendations for northern New England

According to a recent survey, it's likely that you and your neighbors believe having a lawn that is safe for the environment is very important.* However, some lawn care practices can create water quality problems. Excess nutrients (including nitrogen and phosphorus found in fertilizers) that run off our properties into local waterbodies can trigger algal blooms that cloud water and rob it of oxygen.

Many of us enjoy the time we spend working on our lawns and are willing to try new practices as long as our lawns continue to look good.* Here are some easy practices for creating and maintaining a truly healthy lawn – attractive and safer for the environment.

For additional resources, please visit:
www.extension.unh.edu/Sustainable-Landscapes-and-Turf

Simple Recommendations for Every Lawn

- 1. Choose the Right Grass Seed**
 - Consider limiting lawn area to locations where grass will grow easily and will actually be used for outdoor activities.
 - Choose grass varieties that require less maintenance. For northern New England, choose seed mixes with higher percentages of turf-type tall fescues, compact-type fall fescues and/or fine fescues. Choose mixes with smaller percentages of Kentucky bluegrass and/or perennial ryegrass.
 - In shaded areas, select shade-tolerant turf grasses like fine-leaf and tall fescues.
 - Up to 10% of total seed mix can be white clover to help fix nitrogen in soil naturally. Avoid clover if anyone in the household is allergic to bee stings.
- 2. Don't Overwater**
 - If irrigating, one inch of water per week is typically enough. Overwatering can lead to runoff and leaching of contaminants into groundwater.
- 3. Test Your Soil**
 - Sometimes adjusting the soil pH or organic matter are the only treatments needed to improve a lawn. If the soil test results come back as acceptable but your lawn is not, then check for other problems like pest infestations. Learn more at: bit.ly/Test-Your-Soil
- 4. Mow Smart**
 - Mow grass 3" or higher. Cut no more than 1/3 of the blade to encourage longer, stronger turf grass roots. Leave the clippings after mowing to provide a source of low release nutrients.

<http://seagrant.unh.edu>

Key Findings – Lawn Care Nutrient Practices in New England

- A MARKET EXISTS
 - Over seventy three percent (**73.3%**) agree or strongly agree that adopting environmentally friendly lawn care practices is important for improving water quality.
- RESIDENTS RECOGNIZE LAND-WATER CONNECTION
 - Linking the impacts of over-fertilization on water quality with a specific body of water is essential. Over seventy-nine percent (**79.4%**) of respondents rated that framing as important or very important when considering their own actions
- THEY'RE WILLING TO ACT
 - Respondents are very accepting of several simple practices: 1) using fertilizers that expressly protect water quality; 2) cutting grass a higher height, and 3) leaving clippings on the lawn. Respondents indicate that it is not important that a lawn be clover-free.
- APPEARANCE MATTERS
 - Close to seventy seven percent (**76.9%**) of respondents assert that it is important that their lawn look the same as it currently does if they adopt environmentally friendly alternatives.

More Key Findings And Recommendations Using **Social Norms**: Potential Messages

- APPEARANCE MATTERS

- “Fitting in” is important to most respondents: **69.7%** agreed or strongly agreed that they want their lawn to look good enough to fit into their community

- WATER QUALITY MATTERS to the economy too!

- **30.5%** of respondents believe their work or business is economically dependent on the quality of their watershed

- ENVIRONMENT MATTERS

- When asked about what features of a lawn are most important, the most common response was that lawns be safe for the environment.

More Key Findings and Recommendations for Message Delivery

- TIMING MATTERS

- Results (survey and interviews) indicate the timing of the messages is important, focus on when lawn care decisions are made or activities undertaken.

- PACKAGING MATTERS

- As expected, the most commonly used source of information on lawn care is product packaging. This reinforces that a point of purchase effort may be essential for success.

- MESSENGERS MATTER

- Master gardeners and University Extension are considered the most trustworthy information sources by far, so being clear about affiliations and providing additional sources of information associated with these groups is useful and appropriate.
- Media sources are not widely used or trusted.

Understanding Barriers and Incentives to Building Rain Gardens - 2007

- Carried out by University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension and Lake Ripley Management Unit
- Focused on residents of Lake Ripley watershed in southern Wisconsin



Key Findings with Recommendations – Barriers and Incentives for Rain Gardens

- RESIDENTS RECOGNIZE LAND-WATER CONNECTION
 - Most residents recognized the link between rain gardens and water quality.
- BARRIERS EXIST, BUT ARE SURMOUNTABLE
 - Residents have some concern about expense, time and technical knowledge; some preference for lawn. **Help clients visualize gardens and help them feel they “fit in”.**
- WILLING TO ACT; INCENTIVES TO ACT
 - Predictors of intent to install – cost share; belief in AND value outcomes. **Offer cost share for plants (i.e. discounts, coupons, partners). Emphasize water quality, habitat and property value benefits as outcomes**
- SUBJECTIVE and SOCIAL NORMS MATTER
 - Significant predictor - degree to which respondents believed **significant others** would look favorably toward them installing a rain garden. **Engage friends, neighbors and family; Help host neighborhood promotions and community days.**



WARNING - The Seven Sins of Greenwashing

1. Sin of the Hidden Trade-Off
2. Sin of No Proof
3. Sin of Vagueness
4. The Sin of Worshiping False Labels
5. Sin of Irrelevance
6. Sin of the Lesser of Two Evils
7. Sin of Fibbing



sinsofgreenwashing.com - The Sins of Greenwashing : Home and Family Edition, 2010, TerraChoice (Underwriters Laboratory)

BUSINESS PLANNING: Choose an Objective and Apply the 5 Ps of Marketing

- A. Increase the number of **rain gardens** you install and/or maintain.
 - E.g. Set a target for number of rain gardens to install next season or target for maintenance contracts.
- B. Increase the number of **pervious pavement systems** you install and maintain (in place of impermeable patios or walkways).
 - E.g. Install (a target no.) of pervious pavement systems instead of impermeable patios or walkways.
- C. Increase the number of **waterfront properties** you provide water quality-friendly landscaping for.
- D. Increase the number of **water quality-friendly lawns or landscapes** you design, install and/or maintain.
 - E.g. Target a number of square feet that you will design install or maintain using the water-quality friendly practices
- E. Other?

People

- Which customers/clients should you target for your WQ-friendly products and services?
 - Municipalities/public properties, commercial properties, homeowners?
- What barriers do you anticipate in reaching them or convincing them?
- Who do they influence or who are they influenced by?
- What motivates them?
- What incentives are likely to be effective for them?
- How do you deliver customer satisfaction? How do you know?

Products and Services

- What specific products/services do you wish to promote?
 - What types of practices or design elements will you emphasize?
- How confident are you of your ability to provide a high quality version of this product/service?
- Can you describe specifically the impact of this product / service on water quality?
- Can you describe the benefits this product/service will bring to you customers/clients?
- How should you package or deliver your product/service?

Price

- What influence do you have over the cost of WQ friendly products/services?
- What monetary disincentives exist?
- What monetary incentives exist or could be offered?
- What non-monetary disincentives exist?
- What non-monetary incentives exist or could be offered?
- Are there unique ways you can approach pricing?

Place

- Can target customers/clients easily find you?
- Is it convenient for them to do business with you?
- How important is your customer/client's place in the watershed to them?
- What aspects of "place" does your client identify with?
- What places can be used to help promote your product/services?

Promotion

- What are the best ways of reaching your target clients?
- What appeals most to them – appearance, norms, effectiveness, convenience, cost, etc?
- What are the key messages for your target client?
- Who are the key messengers for your products and services?
- What creative elements should you use?
- What are the key communication channels to use?
 - Are clients getting a consistent perception of your product/service across multiple channels?

What Else?

- What additional skills, knowledge or resources would help you and professionals like you decrease the amount of polluted runoff entering coastal waters from landscapes you influence?