A Better Lawn Without Pesticides

Links:

- Water Right - http://www.nrcc.cornell.edu/industry/lawn_water/
- What’s Bugging You White Grubs - https://nysipm.cornell.edu/whats-bugging-you/white-grubs/
- Springtime Ants Video: https://youtu.be/KamKJrrzH5Q
- Nematodes for White Grubs - https://hdl.handle.net/1813/69613
- Grub Identification - http://grubid.cals.cornell.edu
- Embrace the weeds - https://blogs.cornell.edu/nysipm/2019/03/28/happy-national-weed-appreciation-day/
- New York State IPM Program Landscapes, Parks, and Golf Courses website: https://nysipm.cornell.edu/community/landscapes-parks-and-golf-courses/

Questions:

Q: Lawn services always come weekly. They probably don't want to mow once a month and adjust their machines to a higher setting. How do you talk to them about this?
A: Regarding lawn services, they want to come regularly because that is how they bill. And unless it is too wet, in which case the equipment could cause soil compaction, or too dry, when the grass itself could be damaged, mowing often can increase the density of Kentucky bluegrass.

As for mowing height, they likely don't want change their mower height of cut between properties. Ideally, they would be convinced to raise the height on all their contracts since it supports root growth and helps grass outcompete weeds. But, if that does not convince them, you are paying for a service and you want them to mow high. You have every right to ask for that and, if they refuse, look for another service that will accommodate your wishes.

Q: How do you reseed lawns without tilling up entire lawn? Got thin spots and some bare spots.
A: Answered live in the presentation here: https://youtu.be/mappXiLV2Fk?t=1387. This is also covered in Lawn Care: The Easiest Steps to an Attractive Environmental Asset. Scroll to the bottom to view the video Patch Weak or Bare Spots.

Q: Does keeping grass tall encourage ticks?
A: Mowing grass short is often on lists of ways to discourage ticks from backyards, but there is no research showing that the mowing height makes a difference in tick risk. As long as you keep to the 1/3 rule, the grass should not grow tall enough to increase the amount of ticks.
Having said that, lawns should not be considered tick-free. They are poor tick habitat, but still habitat. Protect yourself from tick bites by using the strategies found at [www.DontGetTickedNY.org](http://www.DontGetTickedNY.org).

Q: What's the best website for identifying the varieties of grass in the lawn?
A: A good site to identify turfgrass species: [https://extension.psu.edu/the-cool-season-turfgrasses-identification](https://extension.psu.edu/the-cool-season-turfgrasses-identification)

Q: What’s a good website for identifying weeds.
A: Here’s a good site for weed ID in lawns: [http://turfweeds.cals.cornell.edu/plants](http://turfweeds.cals.cornell.edu/plants)

### Avoiding the Sting: Inspections to Locate and Remove Wasp Nests

**Links:**
- Bees & Wasps YouTube playlist: [https://youtu.be/ew6TP9szZlw](https://youtu.be/ew6TP9szZlw)
- What’s Bugging You Stinging Insects page: [https://nysipm.cornell.edu/whats-bugging-you/stinging-insects/](https://nysipm.cornell.edu/whats-bugging-you/stinging-insects/)

**Questions:**

Q: What about carpenter bees in eaves of sheds?
A: Female carpenter bees build nests in exposed wood, and multiple generations of bees can use the same site. This can make carpenter bees a long-term problem. We have attempted trapping and exclusion to reduce carpenter bee damage. We found that, for the most part, exclusion materials hold up over time, but carpenter bees will just create new holes. Bees can be trapped, but we’re not all bees enter traps – and other flying insects get caught too. We suspect that a combination of exclusion and trapping can reduce problems. Targeted pesticide application by a pest management professional is effective when dust formulations are used in nest openings.

Q: I have a small wasp nest. Will it necessarily get bigger?
A: If it is a yellowjacket nest (which includes bald-faced hornets), then yes. These nests have a papery envelope around the outside and you cannot see individual combs. They grow quickly as more wasps are produced through the spring and summer. However, if it is a paper wasp nest, no outer covering and you can see the open comb, then it will get bigger, but not the size of a football. For more information, you can review our factsheet on bald-faced hornets ([https://hdl.handle.net/1813/43828](https://hdl.handle.net/1813/43828)) and paper wasps ([https://hdl.handle.net/1813/43829](https://hdl.handle.net/1813/43829)).