

## ENVIRONMENTAL TIP #32



**DID YOU KNOW** that you can make your lawn Corsica River and Bay friendly?

**Reduce or eliminate the use of chemical herbicides and pesticides.** Learn to live with a dandelion or two. Lawn fertilizers and chemicals are a big source of nitrogen and phosphorus pollution and toxic runoff.

**Longer is better.** Make sure the lawn mower blades are sharp. Grass that is slightly long makes a strong, healthy lawn with few pest problems. Weeds have a hard time taking root and growing when grass is around 2½ to 3½ inches for most types of grass.

**Water early.** It is time to water if footprint impressions stay in the lawn and do not spring back. Water early in the morning and only for short periods for time so the soil may absorb the water. Longer grass has stronger roots and retains water better.

**Correct thatch buildup.** Thatch is a layer of dead plant materials between the grass blades and the soil. When thatch gets too thick, deeper than 3/4 of an inch, water and nutrients are prevented from getting into the soil and reaching the roots of the grass. Overusing synthetic fertilizer can create heavy layer of thatch, and some kinds of grass are prone to thatch buildup.

**Recycle grass.** Don't pick up the grass clippings after you mow. Clippings will return nutrients and moisture to the soil. Consider buying a mulching lawn mower. This will cut the grass clippings finer and blow them into the lawn.

**Let your lawn breathe.** Once a year, remove small plugs of earth to allow air and water to aerate the grass roots.

**Invite a few weeds and insects into your garden.** Often, nature provides its own pest control in the form of birds or other insects that feed on the insects we consider nuisances.

**Always remember that what we do on land affects the Corsica River and the Chesapeake Bay –**  
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