

Just Say NO to Lawn-Care Chemicals

By Martha Harter Buckalew

Would our water, wildlife or environment be positively impacted if lawn chemicals were not used?

According to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), lawn chemicals have a negative effect on the environment no matter where they are applied. Although the property owner's original intent is to improve his landscape—or outdoor living space—the chemicals ultimately have an adverse effect. They taint drinking water, harm wildlife and pollute the environment.

So how do you maintain and/or beautify an outdoor living space and avoid using chemicals? The EPA recommends that home owners choose native plants. There are many beautiful specimens to choose from, and they require less maintenance after they become established.

To save both time and money, the EPA further advises property owners to compost. When you toss seemingly useless yard trimmings into the compost bin, you're putting dollars into your wallet. Composting recycles dead plant matter into nutrients for new plant growth, and it gives you free fertilizer and mulch. Both will make your yard healthier.

For more detailed information from the EPA, search their website for: *GreenScaping – The Easy Way to a Greener, Healthier Yard* or copy this link www.epa.gov/oppead1/Publications/catalog/greenscaping.pdf.

Friends who recently were discussing the pros and cons of using lawn chemicals made up this ditty:

*Chemicals are our friend;
They won't leave you in the end.
From Easter to Halloween,
Your yard will stay nice and green.*

Here's my antidote to their poem:

*Chemical poisons spread unseen,
Polluting glen and dale and stream.
Their deadly journey has no end
Until organics are your friend.*

I hope that these ideas will help you have a great-looking yard that is easier to care for, cheaper to maintain; and healthier for your family, pets, wildlife and our environment.