



TOWN OF CAPE ELIZABETH

Healthy Landscape and Turf Maintenance Policy

The intent of this document is to outline the Town of Cape Elizabeth's policies and practices regarding pesticides use, and tree and lawn care practices within the town's parks, grounds, and open spaces.

Policy Statement

The Town of Cape Elizabeth works to manage and maintain Town-owned properties in such a manner that protects the well-being of its users and the environment. Approximately ten years ago, the Town began the transition from synthetic pesticides, herbicides, and fungicides, to a 'hybrid approach' to turf care and pest management. The Town implemented a policy over several years to reduce and/or eliminate to the extent practicable the use of synthetic pesticides.

Policy Guidelines

The Town's policies and practices relating to tree, lawn, and landscape area maintenance, is a multi-tiered approach, focusing on a hierarchy of actions (see Best Management Practices below) to control weeds, fungi, pests, and other detrimental factors on trees, lawns, and landscape areas.

Best Management Practices – Hierarchy of Actions

Means and Methods:

1. ***Use of mechanical methods*** for the control of pests, weeds, and invasive plants/trees.
 - String-Trimming/Weed whacking landscape edges, fence lines, curb/sidewalk/road lines, et cetera.
 - Hand tool and/or powered equipment for weeding/dig/cut/removal
 - Dragging of athletic fields (infield grooming) with mechanical equipment
 - Use of mulch and landscape fabric barriers for weed suppression in landscape areas
 - Tree banding (for control of winter moth as an example)
 - Roadside mowing of weeds and invasives
 - Pest Trapping

2. ***Soil quality enhancement methods*** to improve soil and plant health:
 - Topdressing Lawns with:
 - Organic Compost
 - Organic Loam/Topsoil
 - Organic Fertilizers and weed control
 - Aeration of Lawn Areas to reduce compaction, provide oxygen, and stimulate root growth
 - Re-sod/Reseeding of worn/eroded areas on athletic fields
 - Soil analysis:

- Ongoing soil pH testing and adjustments
 - Complete soil analysis testing (as needed)
 - Overseeding of Lawn Areas
- 3. ***Conserving and introducing beneficial biological controls*** (release of beetles to combat the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid as an example)
- 4. ***Preference to using organic lawn care products*** in lieu of synthetics
 - Utilization of certified PFA's-free organic products
- 5. ***Conventional pesticides used when all other mechanical, organic, and other reasonable options are ineffective:***
 - Applied by licensed applicators
 - Adherence to mandatory rules that minimize human exposure and detriment to the environment
 - Proper seasonal timing and weather conditions for optimal use
 - Proper concentrations, ratios, and application rates
 - Exceptions to the rule:
 - Instances where pests, weeds, or invasives do not respond to organic products or other means and methods.
 - Public Health Related: Poison Ivy, Brown tail Moth, Ticks (in specific areas where human exposure is elevated).
 - Examples of past exceptions and synthetic use for areas that have been negatively impacted: mice, ticks, chinch bugs, Japanese beetles/grubs, ants, red-thread (fungus).
 - Invasives that can cause widespread damage to regional areas (Asian Longhorn Beetle, Hemlock Woolly Adelgid, Emerald Ash Borer)

Personnel and Professional Guidance: The Town of Cape Elizabeth seeks professional guidance as needed, ensures personnel are trained, and provides or coordinates public education as requested.

- **Regional and Professional Guidance**
 - CCSWCD and Think Blue Maine:
Healthy lawns practices: Aerate, overseed, mow high, soil amendments, etc.
 - Maine Department of Agriculture, Forestry, and Conservation:
 - Maine Natural Areas guidance and resources
 - Maine Forest Service guidance and resources
- **Qualified Personnel**
 - Public Works Director: Stormwater Coordinator/Licensed Arborist/Environmental Science Degree
 - Parks Foreman: Licensed Master Applicator/Horticulture Degree
 - Tree Warden: Licensed Forester/Licensed Arborist/Licensed Master Applicator
 - Facilities Director: Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Coordinator for School campus
- **Education and Outreach**
 - Cumberland County Soil and Water Conservation District
 - Support and Promotion of:

- “Yardscaping” Program and Workshops
 - “From Lawns to Landscapes” Program and Workshops
- Think Blue Maine
 - Support and Promotion of:
 - Watershed and Stormwater Pollution Reduction Programs

Other Noteworthy Efforts: The Town of Cape Elizabeth staff utilize local ordinances, budgetary support, and participates in other initiatives that compliment this policy’s goals.

- **Policy/Other:**
 - Town’s Approved Street Tree List and Tree Ordinance as resources
 - Participation in the ‘No Mow May’ initiative in specific areas of Town properties
 - No mow (or late-season mowing only) areas designated for pollinators, et cetera (Gull Crest, Town Farm, Officers Row Preserve)
 - Additional integrated pest management (IPM) requirements implemented on School Grounds
 - Council/Financial Support:
 - Have supported/approved increased budgets for transition to organic products
 - Have supported/approved several capital equipment budgets for mechanical control:
 - Field Groomer Equipment
 - Slice Seeding Equipment