

February 11, 2009

For Immediate Release:



**Nantucket Land Council offers one-day Organic lawn and turf course on Nantucket.**

Hosted by the Nantucket Land Council and taught by Chip Osborne of Osborne Organics, the class will be held on Tuesday, March 10<sup>th</sup> at the Bartlett's Farm Hayloft. A small fee of \$35, which includes a delicious lunch catered by the farm, will help offset the cost of the program. The course is designed for professional landscapers, but is open to all interested homeowners or amateur gardeners who would like to learn more about caring for their lawn organically.

The event is a follow-up to the Nantucket Land Council's scholarship program for professional landscapers to attend the Northeast Organic Farming Association (NOFA) Organic Land Care Accreditation Course. During the past 2 years, over 20 landscapers received grants of \$1,000 to attend one of the 5-day accreditation programs off-island. Landscapers who are already accredited by NOFA may take this one-day course for re-accreditation credits.

The course will include discussion of the following topics:

- Understanding Soil Biology
- Growing Turf Naturally
- Cultural Practices for Natural Turf
- Practical Solutions for Professional Landscapers

For more in-depth information on the course topics, please refer to the attached syllabus.

The Nantucket Land Council is focused on increasing awareness of the damage that traditional landscaping techniques have on Nantucket's environment. The effects of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers can be seen in our ponds, harbors and most importantly, our groundwater.

It is therefore essential that Nantucket visitors and residents are made aware of the effects that non-organic landscaping has on our water. By providing both professionals and amateurs with affordable, hands-on learning opportunities, we can help reduce the harmful practices that are a threat to our environment.

Organic landscaping practices have evolved to meet today's standards and skeptical homeowners will be pleased to discover that an organic garden can look as lush and healthy as a chemically treated garden, but without the dangerous side effects for their families and Nantucket's water. To learn more, we invite you to attend the course, or to contact one of the NOFA accredited landscapers on Nantucket.

Nantucket Land Council Inc.  
Organic Lawn and Turf Workshop  
March 10<sup>th</sup> 9am – 5pm  
The Hayloft at Bartlett's Farm

Course Description

This one day workshop is an educational program designed for landscape contractors. Our approach is to provide education and ongoing support with the idea that a profit center can be created in an existing landscape business. A landscape contractor, armed with the knowledge necessary to execute a natural program, will be able to respond to and satisfy those clients that request an organic approach

**Understanding Soil Biology.** We will discuss and explain the role of microorganisms (bacteria, fungi, nematodes and protozoa) in a natural lawn program. We will discuss how to measure this microbiology (soil testing methods and how to read the reports), and how the microbiology can act to mitigate insect and weed problems, reducing the need for pesticide applications.

**Growing Turf Naturally.** We will discuss techniques for developing and maintaining optimum turf quality without pesticides by developing proper soil biology. We will discuss techniques for increasing OM% through top dressing with compost, how to balance pH for natural weed suppression, brewing and applying compost tea, pre-emergence weed control using corn gluten, when and how to use natural amendments including water insoluble fertilizers.

**Cultural Practices for Natural Turf.** We will discuss how various cultural practices should be altered in a natural lawn care program. Emphasis will be on (1) natural weed suppression through increased mowing height (thereby shading soil, increasing drought tolerance and increasing photosynthesis), (2) the importance of adding oxygen to the soil through aeration (both mechanical and by earthworms), and (3) careful analysis of the irrigation requirements, especially the dangers of too much water which can lead to fungal problems.

**Practical Solutions for Professional Landscapers.** We will study various techniques for addressing customer requirements for lawns and gardens and how and when to apply fertilizers, compost and other soil amendments.