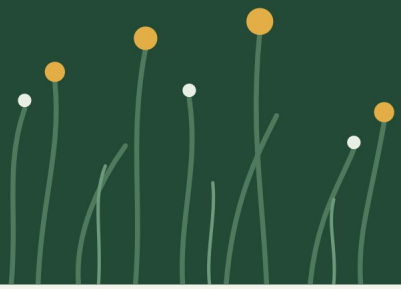
LAWN TO HABITAT · NEIGHBOR FAQ

Less lawn, more life: better for wildlife and water.

This site is changing from mowed grass to native meadow and young woodland. Here are honest answers to common questions.



THE BIG IDEA Nature finds its own balance

YEAR 1
Plant-eaters arrive
New plants draw caterpillars, beetles, and aphids.

YEARS 2–3
Predators follow the food
Lady beetles, spiders, dragonflies, and birds move in to hunt.

YEAR 3 AND BEYOND
Balance takes hold
Hunters and hunted keep each other in check. No one kind takes over.

Why turn a lawn into habitat?

Lawn grass gives wildlife almost nothing to eat. Native wildflowers, grasses, trees, and shrubs feed bees, butterflies, and birds. Their deep roots soak up rain and keep soil out of our creeks. Less mowing means less fuel and noise.

Won't a meadow bring more bugs?

You'll see more *kinds* of insects, and that's a good sign. Most are helpful or harmless, and many, like lady beetles and spiders, hunt plant pests. Insects feed birds, too: a pair of chickadees needs 6,000 to 9,000 caterpillars to raise one nest.

What about mosquitoes?

Mosquitoes lay eggs in standing water, like buckets and clogged gutters, not in plants. Deep-rooted plants help rain soak in instead of pooling. Dragonflies, swallows, and bats eat mosquitoes. Adults may rest in shady plants, so use repellent.

Will it look messy?

A new meadow looks patchy for a year or two while plants grow roots. Gardeners say: the first year they sleep, the second they creep, the third they leap! Mowed edges, signs, and tree shelters show the site is cared for on purpose.

Why spray the lawn first?

Lawn grass grows back from its roots, and tilling stirs up buried weed seeds and loosens soil. So crews spray an herbicide (glyphosate) once or twice before seeding. The brown, dead turf is normal. It holds the soil until the meadow grows in.

After spraying

WET Signs are posted. Keep people and pets off treated areas until the spray dries.

DRY It binds tightly to soil, so it stays put instead of moving through the ground.

LATER Soil bacteria break it down over time. Seeding follows, with no plowing.

NEIGHBOR FAQ, CONTINUED

Ticks, snakes, and exploring safely

Will there be more ticks?

Ticks live in grassy, brushy, and wooded places, so be tick-aware anywhere outdoors. Ticks can't jump or fly. They wait on plant tips and grab on as you brush past. That's why this site has mowed paths: stay on them and you stay out of ticks' reach. Take extra care from May through July, when young ticks are most active.

Found a tick? Grab it close to the skin with fine-tipped tweezers and pull up with steady pressure.

Tick-smart in 5 steps

1. Stay in the middle of mowed paths.
2. Use repellent with DEET, picaridin, or IR3535.
3. Treat clothes with permethrin. Tuck pants into socks.
4. At home, check skin, hair, kids, and pets.
5. Shower within 2 hours. Dry clothes on high heat for 10 minutes.

Will snakes move in?

You may spot one now and then. That's a sign of a healthy habitat. Pennsylvania has 21 kinds of native snakes. The one you'll most likely see is the harmless eastern gartersnake. Only three are venomous, and snakes would much rather avoid you. They help us by eating mice, voles, slugs, and insects.

If you see a snake

- Stop and give it plenty of room.
- Let it move along. Never try to pick it up.
- Keep dogs leashed and on the path.

COME EXPLORE

Walk the mowed paths and look closely

The mowed paths are your front-row seat. Walk slowly, stop often, and bring a phone or notebook. Each season, notice who has moved in. Over time, you'll watch the hunters arrive to match the hunted.

SPRING
Bird song, the first wildflowers, and bees waking up.

SUMMER
Butterflies, dragonflies on patrol, and fireflies at dusk.

FALL
Goldenrod, asters, and monarchs heading south.

WINTER
Animal tracks, seed-eating birds, and stems that shelter bees.

Questions? Bucks County Conservation District · 1456 Ferry Road, Suite 704, Doylestown, PA 18901 · 215-345-7577

Supported by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources. Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; Penn State Extension; Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission; Xerces Society; National Wildlife Federation; National Pesticide Information Center.