Green Residents of Westchester (GROW)

Ecological Commission

Green Lawns & Blue Waters

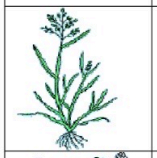
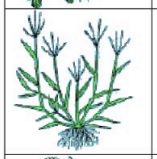
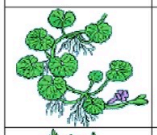
By: Nicole Molinaro ~ GROW Commissioner

Westchester is uniquely positioned with nature in three directions; to the West is Wolf Road Prairie, the South we are connected to the Forest Preserves and the East we have Addison Creek running through our village. While we may believe native landscaping is a modern approach, Jens Jensen in 1888 used only natives in Chicago's Union Park "American Garden", when non-native plants performed poorly.

"Unlike other landscape architects of the period, Jensen was not content to create works of art for society's elite. Instead, Jensen was concerned with **improving the American environment** in general and *thereby improving its people and culture*."

– William H. Tishler is a Fellow in the American Society of Landscape Architects and a professor of landscape architecture at the University of Wisconsin-Madison

COMMON LAWN WEEDS AND WHAT CONTRIBUTES TO THEM

Weed	Common Name	Soil Compaction	Mowing Height	pH	Fertility	Watering	Poor Drainage
	Annual bluegrass	X	L		E	E	
	Clover			L	L (N)	E	
	Crabgrass		L		L	D/E	
	Dandelion	X		L	L (Ca) E (K)		
	Ivy (Ground)						X
	Knotweed	X		L	L (Ca) E (K, Mg),		X
	Plantains	X	L	L	L		X

X- Condition associated with the weed, D- Drought, E- Excessive, H- High, L- Low, K- Potassium, Mg- Magnesium, N- Nitrogen

Illustrations Source: *Cornell University Cooperative Extension*

Read Your "Weeds", A National Coalition for Pesticide-Free Lawns Factsheet – www.pesticidefreelawns.org

As residents we should ask ourselves how we can contribute to our village's ecological value. There is no control of the word "organic" in landscaping like there is in food production. Even if only "organic" products are used, microbes are needed to process nutrients and make more available to plants, otherwise organic will run-off the same as any synthetic. Building an ecosystem in your soil will turn a lawn into a "sink" and increase water holding capacity. This means less flooding! When synthetics are used, not only are you destroying your intended pest or weed, you are killing all of the important microbes your soil needs for ecosystem services. The goal is to increase organic matter in our lawns and gardens. Learning to "Read Your Weeds" is a start in an ecological direction. Want to learn more?

On May 20th @ 9am Village Hall will be hosting a "Natural Lawn Care" presentation by Ryan Anderson from Midwest Grows Green. Lawn alternatives will also be discussed. IL Dept. of Public Health & EPA are supporters of MGG.

https://midwestgrowsgreen.org/

Collectively we can make a difference together not only for Westchester but for all of Proviso. Not sure where to start? GROW Ecological Commission is a resident led public body to help provide information to any environmental questions you may have. We generally meet the first Thursday of the month at 6:30pm.