

Organic Plant Health Care



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Why Organic Plant Health Care?

What is organic plant health care?

Organic plant health care uses cultural practices and biological inputs to build the health of landscapes with a goal of improving overall health and longevity of trees, shrubs, turf and other plants. This is done by improving the system and treating weeds, disease and pests as symptoms *while* working to build system health. By placing biology front and center in this process plants and soils start working together to maintain a balanced system.



Why is organic plant health care beneficial?

- **It creates conditions for more efficient water use.** Healthy, biologically active soils decrease soil compaction, promote deep root growth, and absorb and release water as your plants need it. This means there will be less impact on your space during water restrictions.
- **It makes plants more tolerant to drought and heat stress, and more resilient to attacks by pest and disease.** The diversity of the microbial populations naturally provide custom nutrients and defenses for whatever plants may need at a specific moment in time.
- **It creates spaces that are safe and healthy for family, pets, insects and wildlife.** Once soil health improves, aboveground organisms begin to flourish as well. Insects, birds and other creatures benefit from an improved food web belowground.
- **It builds soils that filter runoff and keep storm water clean.** Organic soils are better at absorbing and breaking down pollutants as dirty runoff moves through them. With microorganisms in the soil taking the place of chemical inputs, there is no risk of nutrients leaching into aquifers or running off into gutters, streams, ponds or lakes.
- **It helps systems effectively store carbon for the long-haul.** Healthy soils emit far less carbon dioxide into the atmosphere than degraded soils. A thriving space also holds more carbon above and below ground.

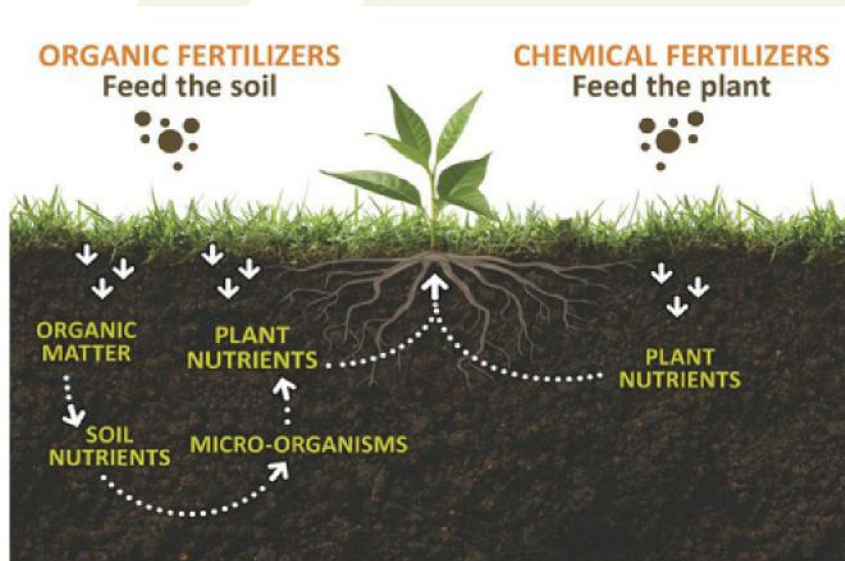
Organic Lawn Care Program

What is organic lawn care?

Our program places the health of the system as the first and only goal. By improving plant health and regaining soil microbial diversity and function, the system regains optimal efficiency and health. This is done with targeted applications created with biology in mind. Our organic lawn care process incorporates low nutrient organic fertilizers, aerations, compost topdressing, overseeding, compost tea applications and organic herbicides (if needed).

Does it really work? Yes! How quickly you see results will depend on a few factors and the condition of your lawn when you begin transitioning to organic. Factors include weed density, thickness of turf and intensity of previous herbicide and synthetic fertilizer applications that may have impacted soil health.

Regardless of where you start, you can achieve great results providing a safe and healthy lawn for your family.



Transitioning from Synthetic to Biologic Switching abruptly from a heavy synthetic regimen to a biologic one may pose a shock to your lawn's system. A few extra applications may be necessary up front to realign your system. It's important to bolster the population of soil microbes so they are able to reclaim their vital roles in your lawn's health.

Did you know?

- Plants get the majority of their nutrition from the microbes around them, both above and below ground.
- In systems that are fed heavy doses of soluble nutrients (the NPK of fertilizers), plants don't need to make beneficial associations with microbes.
- Microbes also play an important role in plant defense by working against pests and disease. They improve abiotic stress resistance and are able to access (and share) water that plant roots can't reach.
- Soluble salts in various fertilizer and pesticide applications lock up water in the soil, making it unavailable to plants or microbes.

To schedule a consultation to determine which program is best for you, please call **303-245-9166** or email information@nativeedgelandscapes.com. One of our Customer Care Representatives will be happy to help.

The 7 Key Program Components

Aeration

Core aeration improves turf health by opening up space in the soil for water and air movement and it punches through any thatch layer that may be repelling water. It also brings microbes to the surface to break down existing thatch.

Pre-emergent

A pre-emergent can be put down to stop weed seeds from germinating in your lawn. The product we use is corn gluten based, is safe for children and pets and does not persist in soil. This service can be removed from any program if deemed unwanted or unnecessary.

Compost Topdress

Topdressing turf with a thin layer of locally made, high-quality compost puts additional organic matter and biology into your system. Organic matter feeds and houses microbes, and holds onto and releases nutrients and large amounts of water.

Overseeding

Overseeding fills in any bare space that weed seeds may have to germinate. We overseed following aeration to ensure that the grass seed has adequate contact with the soil to germinate.

Organic Fertilizer

We use a fertilizer with a NPK rate of 5-3-2 which is just high enough to give your system a nudge but not high enough to pollute run-off. In synthetic programs much of the N, P & K doesn't make it into the plant. It's lost. That's why we like to keep it low.

Weed Spot Spray

We spot spray weeds (rather than blanket spray) using an organic iron based herbicide. The product we use is safe for children and pets and does not persist in soil. This service can be removed from any program if deemed unwanted or unnecessary.

Compost Tea

Compost tea is used to fulfill your plant and/or soil needs whether that be biological inoculant, biological food source, biostimulant or organic fertilizer. We customize our recipes to fit your turfs current needs.

Choosing A Program That Is Right for You

What are your expectations, timeline and budget? We have three plans designed to fit your needs. Some plans will transition your space quickly, while other solutions will fit your budget.

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Selection of Plans

Good -

Our most affordable plan doesn't include compost topdressing and overseeding, but does include compost tea and fertilizer applications. This plan takes longer to achieve a flawless lawn, but it is a step in the right direction.

This is a great maintenance plan once the Better or Best plans have been implemented for 2-3 years.

	Spring April - May	Summer June -July	Fall Aug - Sept
Organic Fertilizer	✓		✓
Compost Tea	✓	✓	✓
Aeration			✓
Compost Topdress			
Overseed			
Weed Spot Spray*	✓	✓	
Pre-emergent*			

Better -

This plan builds on the Good Plan by adding a couple of applications plus a core aeration. The cost is still reasonable, but you'll see results more quickly than with the Good plan.

This plan is a great option for a lawn that has been managed organically, is already pretty healthy and has low weed pressure.

	Spring April - May	Summer June -July	Fall Aug - Sept
Organic Fertilizer	✓	✓	✓
Compost Tea	✓	✓	✓
Aeration			✓
Compost Topdress			
Overseed			✓
Weed Spot Spray*	✓	✓	✓
Pre-emergent*	✓		

Best -

This plan provides the fastest results and the best end product. While it costs more up front, this plan saves you money in the long run. After 1 - 2 years of this plan, the Good or Better plans are completely reasonable maintenance options.

This is the best plan to jump-start a successful organic lawn program.

	Spring April - May	Summer June -July	Fall Aug - Sept
Organic Fertilizer	✓	✓	✓
Compost Tea	✓	✓	✓
Aeration	✓		✓
Compost Topdress	✓		
Overseed			✓
Weed Spot Spray*	✓	✓	✓
Pre-emergent*	✓		

*These services can be removed from the contract at the clients discretion.

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Organic Weed Control & Management



We offer a variety of soil and habitat friendly solutions for controlling and managing undesirable weeds. One of our plant health experts can develop the best solution designed specifically for your space and objectives.

Control Services vs Management Plans

Control Services

Our weed control products and services reduce or temporarily eliminate the visual impact and stamina of weeds through mechanical methods (by hand) or careful applications of herbicides.

When herbicides are necessary we minimize soil damage by spot treating target weeds rather than blanket spraying.

Management Plans

Long-term weed and noxious weed management can be achieved by improving soil and ecosystem health. Our management plan addresses the cultural and biological conditions that weeds are responding to, and provides an alternative route (or prescription) for healing. Improving systems, not just treating symptoms.

More often than not, a two-pronged approach that addresses both immediate control and long-term management objectives is the most effective path forward.

Did you know?

- Weeds play an important role in healing damaged ecosystems, and when removed, another generation, or species will dutifully take their place.
- When soils are too compacted for healthy plant growth, deep tap-rooted weeds start drilling down into the compaction layer. When a slope is loose and at risk of eroding, scrambling weeds grow and hold the slope in place.
- In soils that are high in toxic compounds, hyperaccumulating weeds begin to pull these components out of the soil and store them in aboveground tissues.
- In nature weeds improve soil conditions until they run themselves out of jobs to do- then they stop germinating and growing.

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Organic Pest & Disease Solutions

Plant pests and diseases are like weeds in that they tell a story. They are a symptom of a systemic problem that must be corrected before the problems will go away.

Ultimately, the extent of the damage will influence the overall outcome, so it's best to catch things early. When caught early, plant health can be addressed and adjusted in ways that make the plant "invisible" to pests and disease.

3 Ways To Combat Plant Pests and Disease

- **Improve the plants ability to photosynthesize** via mineral applications. Plants use the carbohydrates they create during photosynthesis to feed beneficial microbes.
- **Increase oxygen content in the soil** by dealing with compaction and water-logging around the root system. Plants struggle without ample oxygen to their roots and disease organisms thrive in low oxygen environments.
- **Improve the plants defense response** by applying compost tea with a specific biological profile. A robust and diverse population of microorganisms on plant surfaces physically blocks pathogens from getting into plant cells.

Did you know?

- Unhealthy plants contain sugar and protein compounds that can easily be digested by pests whereas healthy plants contain complex sugars and proteins that are more difficult for many pests to break down.
- Unhealthy plants reflect a light signature that is invisible to the human eye, but insatiable to pests.
- Health can differ drastically from one plant to another. That's why one plant can be covered in pests while the one next to it is barely touched.
- Beneficial bacteria can release compounds that trigger plants into producing chemicals that deter or even kill pests and pathogens.



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Organic Wildlife & Mosquito Solutions

We offer soil and habitat friendly solutions that help keep your plants safe from deer and rabbits and help keep you and your family safe from mosquitos. One of our plant health experts can help determine which solution is best for your space and objectives.

Deer and Rabbit Repellent Deer and rabbits can have a big impact on landscapes. Deer rub on trees and chew and rip leaves and young branches off. Rabbits eat plants down, and their concentrated waste products damage soil biology. Fortunately these animals are repelled by smell, taste and fear. We can apply a product in your space on monthly intervals that will keep them away. It is biodegradable, safe for plants and pets and smells more like mint than deer repellent.



Mosquito Repellent While mosquitoes aren't a major problem in our region, they can be a nuisance during wet seasons, near new construction or wet areas like ditches or ponds. We can regularly apply a non-toxic repellent made with 6 essential oils and *free of* DEET, pyrethrin and permethrin. This product is safe for children, pets, pollinators and plants.

To get in touch with one of our specialists, please call **303-245-9166** or email information@nativeedgelandscapes.com.

Soil Testing & Analysis Services

How do you determine the health of my soils?

We get a clear picture of your soil's health by taking a deep dive "under the hood". We visually and physically evaluate site conditions, the collect soil samples to test and analyze. Most of these tests are performed in-house and some are even performed on-site. With all of the information we gather, we are able determine the health of your soil and how it relates to current and future plant health.



We evaluate results from the following soil tests to build a complete picture of the health of your soil.

- Biological Soil Analysis (Soil Food Web)
- Physical Soil Analysis
- Chemical Soil Analysis
- Soil Salinity
- Soil Compaction
- Water Infiltration
- Existing Weed Species

These test results give us an overall view of soil health and tell us exactly where soil improvements need to be made.

Soil Health Score Reference <small>*Based on physical, chemical and biological soil tests. Results below.</small>		
Score	Condition	Description
1-35	Poor	Poor Soil Quality- Soils in this category do not function properly. Water doesn't infiltrate, so soil is prone to runoff. These soils host an abundance of weeds and do not supply plant-available nutrients. Desirable plants often perish in these soils. These soils need a great deal of physical, biological and potentially mineral adjustments to regain their functionality.
36-63	Challenged	Challenged Soil Quality- Soils in this category may face challenges such as poor drainage, poor nutrient availability and compaction. Weeds play an important role in improving soil quality. Desirable plants struggle to grow in these soils. Quick soil improvements may be achievable with the proper corrective actions.
72-100	Excellent	Excellent Soil Quality- Soils in this category function very well and need little help. They hold and release water like a sponge, are resistant to erosion, do not grow weeds and supply plants with all the nutrients they need. Desirable plants thrive in these soils.

What types of things can improve the health of my soils?

Sometimes soils don't have the proper minerals present and sometimes they don't have the correct microbes present. These two components affect soil structure, nutrient availability and moisture retention. Adding them back to the soil in measured amounts starts to improve soils from the inside out. This can be done with solid materials like compost or liquid materials like compost teas or nutrient sprays. Other times the biggest impact can be made by getting oxygen down into your soil.

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Hiring An Expert



Where do I begin?

The process begins with an onsite Plant Health Assessment with one of our Plant & Soil Health experts. At this time our expert will highlight any potential plant and soil health challenges they may find, and discuss any areas that are of concern to you. Through this conversation it will become more clear whether your situation requires an in-depth testing protocol such as a Plant & Soil Health Report (for an additional charge), or if there are some quick changes you can make to help the health of your plants and soil.

One to two weeks after the initial visit our expert will email a written proposal that outlines recommended services, timelines, and associated costs needed to complete a program that meets your unique needs. This proposal is followed by a phone call to answer any questions related to it.

The cost of this initial visit is \$89 for new clients, but is complimentary for currently contracted maintenance or design-build clients.

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