

Green-Blue Grants Program - Clean Water through Residential IPM

Submitted to Northeastern IPM Center – September 2007

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2. Objectives & Rationale: Cooperative Extension will partner with Friends of Casco Bay and the Maine Board of Pesticides Control to offer a one-day educational event in February of 2008 to educate and inform professional lawn care providers, landscapers, arborists, pest control professionals, garden center operators and their workers in low impact lawn and yard care in southern Maine. The program partners have been working together for over ten years to promote and educate the public in environmentally sound lawn care and gardening through the BayScaping and YardScaping Programs. A persistent need has been identified through numerous consumer requests for cultural information as well as a directory of professionals and businesses offering organic or low input lawn and yard care. This proposed effort will reach lawn and yard care related business owners and operators in the region to address the issues of water quality improvement and reducing environmental impact.

Objective 1 Months prior to the target event, a survey will be created by the partners and administered to determine the needs and wants of homeowners relating to lawn care. Responses will be compiled for presentation and discussion at the event. Participants will be exposed to the consumer survey results as well as other data related to pesticide and fertilizer usage and its potentially negative influence on water quality and the environment when misused or overused.

Objective 2 Participants will learn

- that a segment of the population in the Casco Bay region is seeking alternative, low input and organic lawn care practitioners for hire.
- how to develop a low input and organic management plan for fertilizers and pests of lawns, gardens, trees and structures.
- how to adapt their current practices, integrate low input practices, present information to customers and promote environmentally sound lawn and yard care.

Objective 3 This targeted effort will produce one or more customized fact sheets for use with current and potential customers that will present alternatives and help them make environmentally sound decisions about their lawn and yard.

Rationale In the Casco Bay region of Maine, there are currently over 530 licensed pesticide applicators whose emphasis is turf or lawn care, an estimated 50 licensed arborists, approximately 50 garden centers, an estimated 40 pest management specialists, and estimated 600 lawn care companies. We feel that reaching this audience of professionals will have a positive impact on the fresh water bodies of the region and to Casco Bay. By reaching these professionals and developing a relationship with them, we will have a better chance of reducing the overuse and misuse of pesticides and fertilizers on lawns and gardens in southern Maine.

3. Fitting with the Green Blue Summit Ideas

This effort is designed to address professionals. Our proposed efforts correspond directly with the following ideas identified and developed at the Green Blue Summit.

- Many commercial operations have a very small number of clients and little access to education or training on lawn care. Training such applicators in IPM, scouting, and spot

treatments may be easier than reaching “do it yourself” homeowners. This group also has an economic incentive not to waste chemicals.

- Pest management professionals need to be trained in situations that can profoundly affect drinking water, such as wells siphoning water and contaminating aquifers.
- For education of lawn care professionals, digest the basics into easy-to-use references; use buddy training systems; use hands-on training for front-line employees who then pass it on to consumers.

4. Evaluation Plan: Professionals will be surveyed prior to the training and 2-4 weeks after the training to determine the impact of the event. In addition, a final report will describe how and if all objectives were met.

5. Budget

Room Rental for educational event <i>Tentatively planned for Verillo’s Conference Center in Portland, Maine</i>	\$500.00
Speaker Fees – Two guest speakers @ \$300 each <i>Mary Owen, University of Massachusetts Dr. Frank Rossi, Cornell University</i>	\$600.00
Printed Materials - <i>University of Southern Maine print shop for fact sheets, cards, and promotional materials</i>	\$900.00
Postage	\$250.00
Evaluation Survey and Compilation of Results <i>Cumberland County Extension Association</i>	\$250.00
<hr/> Total Requested	\$2500.00

5. In-Kind or Matching Funds

Cumberland County Extension Office Support Staff time and materials	\$800.00
University of Maine Cooperative Extension Faculty and Staff time	\$1000.00
Maine Board of Pesticides Control Staff time and materials	\$500.00
Friends of Casco Bay Staff time and materials	\$500.00
Cumberland County Soil & Water Conservation District Staff time and materials	\$500.00
Participant Registration fee	\$750.00
<hr/> Total In-kind and Matching Funds	\$4050.00