

Green-Blue Grants Program Application
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Educating Capital District Consumers About Lawn Care And Water Quality

Objective: To educate Capital District homeowners about how integrated pest management methods for home lawns can have a positive impact on water quality.

Rationale: The three Capital District Counties of New York (Albany, Rensselaer and Schenectady) are home to over 600,000 people, many of whom own a suburban lawn. The region's streams and rivers primarily empty into the Hudson River. As the development of the watershed increases, home sizes become larger and homeowners become wealthier, more people are interested in having an attractive lawn. Cornell Cooperative Extension has an active education program in this region, with a Turfgrass Diagnostic Lab, classes for turfgrass professionals, IPM research projects and Master Gardener efforts all contributing positive messages about lawn care.

Procedure: This proposal is for a half-day, early spring educational symposium, entitled "Healthy Lawns, Healthy Hudson" which will attempt to educate a large number of residents directly as well as raise awareness of how proper lawn care can positively impact water quality and the environment. Additionally, fact sheets and promotional materials created for the symposium will be available at Spring Garden Days, the Capital District Flower Show, county fairs, and other educational events sponsored or attended by Cornell Cooperative Extension in 2008.

The symposium will provide basic lawn care information, such as cultural and pest management recommendations, within the context of the following themes selected by the Green-Blue Summit: choosing the right grass for the site, accepting some weeds and imperfections, choosing lowest risk options and products first, spot treating where possible, timing treatments properly, and taking steps to keep products away from impervious surfaces and surface water.

The author of this proposal will be the project leader. Colleagues in Albany and Schenectady counties, as well as Master Gardeners in all three counties, will provide project support.

Promotion: The program will be promoted via the brochure designed especially for the symposium. Additionally, the program will be featured in the project leader's gardening

columns in two local newspapers, the “Record” and the “Independent,” as well as Extension’s printed “GroNews” newsletter and electronic “Root Concerns” newsletter.

Evaluation: Attendees will be surveyed three times using a short (one page or less) questionnaire. The first survey will take place at the start of the symposium, to determine the initial level of lawn care knowledge. The second will take place at the end of the symposium, to measure knowledge gained. The final survey will be mailed to attendees during the summer of 2008, to measure behavioral change. Results will be reported back to the Green-Blue grants committee.

Budget:

Item	Cost	Vendor
Postage	\$250.00	Cornell Cooperative Extension of Rensselaer County (CCERC) and US Postal Service
“Homeowner’s Lawn Care And Water Quality Almanac”, color photocopied, 150 copies	\$900.00	CCERC
Promotional brochure for the symposium, 700 copies	\$175.00	CCERC
“Lawn Care Without Pesticides” bulletin, 150 copies	\$942.50	Cornell University
Promotional “Healthy Lawns, Healthy Hudson” magnets (150)	\$150.00	Unknown at this time
Refreshments	\$100.00	Hannaford Supermarkets
Total	\$2,517.50	
Total requested from Green-Blue Program	\$2,500.00	

Local garden centers, such as Hewitt’s (a local chain in the Capital District) will be approached for their support. Cornell Cooperative Extension will provide a meeting space, speakers, support staff and office support for the project.