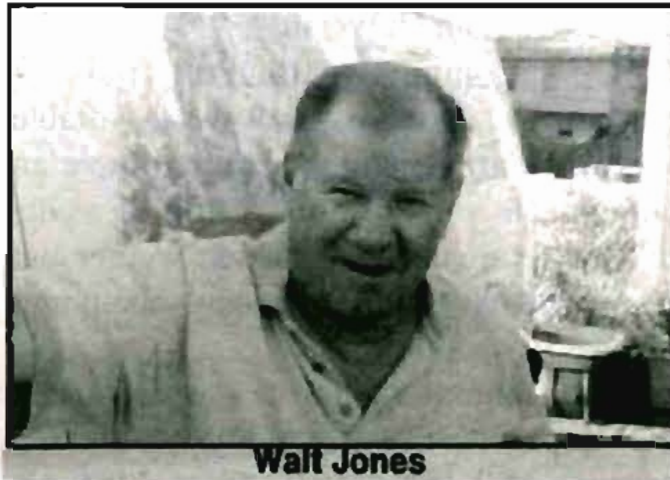


“Go Green” with lawn care

There are many benefits of maintaining a healthy lawn, including muffled noise, moderated temperatures, improved air quality, reduced dust and pollen and increased home value. With the spring season now upon us, a basic understanding of lawn care will help homeowners make an informed decision about their future lawn care. Here are some tips from Walt Jones, owner of Spring-Green Lawn Care in Newport News, on how to maintain a healthy lawn.

There are three basic methods of lawn treatment, says Jones.

- The most common and traditional method is to apply synthetic fertilizers to improve lawn health and Environmental Protection Agency-registered chemicals to combat disease and insects. Within days of treatment, lawns will look greener, making the homeowner see that progress is being



Walt Jones

made.

- As Americans focus on “going green,” organic treatments methods are growing in popularity. Compost teas, corn gluten, verma-compost and dozens of naturally-occurring solutions are available. A possible downside: Treatments using natural materials require patience. It may be months before a lawn begins to show improvement and the homeowner will

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need to spend more time on reseeding and weeding. The other issue to be considered with organic treatment is the cost, as organic products generally will cost more than synthetic products.

- The compromise between these two treatment options is an organic-based lawn care program where synthetic fertilizer is mixed with organic materials to provide both quick improvement and long-term enrichment. For example, Jones’s Spring-Green professionals apply 10 to 15 pounds of organic material per 1,000 square feet of lawn per year. Some synthetic fertilizer is included to provide quick results while

the organic materials begin the slow natural process of improving the soil. Chemical pest and weed control are applied as needed. Often, these solutions are applied only to the areas of infestation to reduce the amount used.

Says Jones, “For some homeowners, going green with all naturally occurring materials is worth the wait, the cost and the possible extra work. Other homeowners may want to stick with the balanced traditional compounds that have been used for decades. Still others will want a mixture of both methods which seems to be the current favorite solution.”