



Questions to Ask your Lawn Care Company

South Portland prohibits the use of synthetic lawn care pesticides throughout the City and only allows the use of organic products that are not hazardous to people, pets, pollinators and the environment. Below are some basic questions that you can ask your lawn company to make sure they are in compliance with the ordinance and knowledgeable about organic practices.

The shift to products that are compatible with organic land management practices can result in beautiful and healthy lawns in our city. With some simple questions, you can help ensure that your landcare company is knowledgeable about the most effective organic landcare practices.

What to Ask Your Lawn Care Company	Why is this important?
Are the products you'll be applying to my property allowed under South Portland's new pesticide ordinance?	<i>It's the law. If you or they are unsure, ask to see the label. Allowed products may be labeled with an organic certification logo and should list all their ingredients (including inert/other ingredients).</i>
Have employees at your company attended organic land care trainings?	<i>Organic land care is not just about swapping synthetic products for organic ones. It is a systemic approach that starts with building healthy soil and changing cultural practices. Training is essential to this process.</i>
Will you be taking a soil test before any fertilizers or pest control products are applied to my property?	<i>With a good soil fertility program that utilizes organic fertilizers, your soil will produce nutrients that support a beautiful lawn. Soil tests for chemistry and biology are the best guide to correct nutrient imbalances in a lawn's soil so that fertilizers will not be unnecessarily applied.</i>
What are the types of practices you will be using at my property?	<i>Best practices for organic lawn care include: mowing high, aerating, dethatching, overseeding, and topdressing with compost or compost tea.</i>
Does the company monitor for pests, or plan to apply products on a fixed schedule?	<i>Applying product on a fixed schedule without soil tests, even with products allowed under the ordinance, can undermine a healthy lawn.</i>
What is the company's approach if weed and pest problems are found in my lawn?	<i>Pesticides, even allowed pesticides, should never be the first line of defense for weed and pest problems. Make sure that the company focuses on mechanical, cultural, and biological controls before considering the use of pest control products.</i>