




Weeds... Our attempt to control them can be exhausting and sometimes fruitless. It seems these tenacious plants somehow always find their way back into our lawns. But, if we look at the big picture of things; beyond creating a perfect green lawn, we can see the methods we are using to control these persistent plants may be doing us more harm than good. *In the big scheme of things, the lawn chemicals we use to control pests can harm our water quality as well as the beneficial pollinators that fertilize our food for free, like the honeybee.* 1 in every 3 bites of food we eat (and even the coffee we drink) come from pollinators, and many have been declining at alarming rates world-wide.

So, as we work on our yards this year, let's keep the bigger picture in mind and *consider the long-term health of our food and water* as we make our lawns gorgeous. Your yard can be beautiful & functional! Remember, many "weeds" got their start by being beneficial to us and were brought here as medicines and sources of food. Let's keep an open mind to the possibility of allowing more diversity in your yard and alternative lawn care approaches.

It's a 2 for 1!

***What's good for our water quality is also good for our food.
You have the power to help both in your own backyard!***

- Reducing or eliminating the use of chemicals on your property helps keep our water clean and pollinators healthy. If using lawn chemicals is necessary, try to wait until after the blooms are dead to spray reducing pollinators' exposure to the toxin's. Also try organic chemicals (thisoldhouse.com/ideas/tips-lush-organic-lawn).
- A lawn 3 inches tall retains more water in the plants and soil, helps filter more run off through the growth process, prevents soil erosion, improves soil quality and health, and the longer grass can smother out weeds (tinyurl.com/o3r4lp).
- Many of the honeybee's natural food sources are gone. Planting plots of native flowers creates food sources for them and improves drainage and filtration of stormwater through their long roots (www.ophi.info).
- The white clover & dandelions growing in your lawn can provide great early season forage for honeybees. So try to "bee" open to leaving a few patches of clover and dandelions for them to feed on. Or, give the bees some time to eat on the fresh flowers and mow the clover and dandelions just before they go to seed (fws.gov/pollinators/).
- Look for the US EPA's  emblem on the label of a lawn chemical before your buy to learn about its impacts on pollinators.
- Report bee kills to (beekill@epa.gov).

Sources (US Dept. of Agriculture, US Fish & Wildlife Service, Ohio Pollinator Initiative, Wall Street Daily, NBC News)