

### **If I need to use a fertilizer what products can I use?**

Organic fertilizers are allowed when a comprehensive soil test conducted within the same calendar year indicates a need for nitrogen. Applications of organic fertilizer may not contain nutrients in excess of the amount recommended by the completed soil test. Only phosphorus-free, organic fertilizer is allowed for these applications unless the soil test indicates a need for phosphorus.

The use of compost is always acceptable.

### **How do I get a soil test?**

Free soil test kits are available from county extension offices, USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service offices, or your local Soil and Water Conservation District.

### **If I need to use a pesticide what products can I use?**

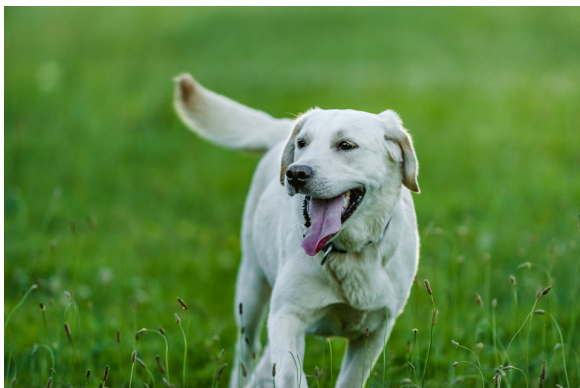
If a weed or pest problems occur, the City allows the use of pesticides that are certified organic by the USDA or considered “minimum risk” by the EPA.

### **Allowed Products**

To see if a product is in compliance with the ordinance check whether the product is “OMRI Listed.” The Organic Materials Review Institute (OMRI) reviews and lists products that are in compliance with these statutes. Use the OMRI searchable database at [omri.org/omri-search](https://omri.org/omri-search).

### **Product Labeling**

Look for the yellow YardScaping sticker at garden centers and hardware stores. This is a simple way to know which products are allowed under this ordinance.



## Portland Landcare Ordinance Waiver Process

Before a restricted fertilizer or pesticide can be used in the City, your lawn care applicator must request and receive approval from the City of Portland. This applies to each application.

There are four approved reasons for requesting a waiver:

1. For an existing situation that threatens public health and safety
2. For the control of invasive plants that pose a threat to the environment
3. To protect buildings or structures from damage
4. For use of a synthetic fertilizer on performance turf or for new development, with one or more of the following conditions:
  - a. The soil temperature is less than 55 degrees Fahrenheit and reasonable grounds exist to justify fertilizer use at that location and at that time;
  - b. The turf is experiencing high stress due to high use and must be ready for high performance play when the sports season(s) begin; or
  - c. A suitable organic product that meets the nutrient needs of the soil as specified in a soil test is unavailable.

*Note: Pesticide applications for the management of invasive insects (as defined by the Maine Forest Service) are exempt under the ordinance and therefore no waiver is needed.*

*Note: Broadcast applications and preemptive treatments are prohibited, even when a waiver is granted.*

Waiver applications are available at City Hall and online at:  
[www.portlandmaine.gov/Landcare](https://www.portlandmaine.gov/Landcare)



## What you need to know about landcare in Portland

As of January 1, 2019, the City of Portland's Pesticide Use Ordinance prohibits the use of synthetic pesticides on all public and private property. The Ordinance has since been amended and renamed as a Landcare Ordinance to restrict the use of fertilizers in Portland effective March 19, 2023. The city enacted this ordinance to protect the health of our waterways, residents, pets, and natural ecosystems.

By eliminating synthetic fertilizers and pesticides and establishing an organic lawn care system, your lawn will require fewer resources while resulting in healthy soil with fewer pests and weeds.



## What are the ordinance basics?

As of January 1, 2019, lawn and garden products that contain synthetic pesticides are prohibited on all public and private property in Portland, Maine. This ordinance prohibits weed killers that contain glyphosate (such as Roundup TM), fertilizer/pesticide combinations (weed and feed) and insecticides that contain imidacloprid.

As of March 19, 2023 applications of lawn and garden synthetic fertilizers are prohibited on all public and private property in Portland, Maine. Additionally, the use of organic fertilizers is restricted.

The Landcare Ordinance covers the following areas:

- Lawns
- Vegetable and ornamental gardens
- Landscaped areas
- Patios
- Sidewalks
- Driveways
- Parks and playing fields

For more information on the ordinance, products you can and can't use, and tips on how to achieve organic land care, visit [www.portlandmaine.gov/Landcare](http://www.portlandmaine.gov/Landcare)

## How will this ordinance be enforced?

Portland's Sustainability Office maintains all the fertilizer and pesticide waiver applications and a listing of complaints of alleged violations. The City's Sustainability Coordinator will work with contractors and the public to bring any alleged violators into compliance by providing educational materials and advice on the use of organic practices and products.

## Are there any exemptions?

Yes, the following are NOT covered by the ordinance.

- Indoor and structural pest management (eg. termites)
- Commercial agriculture
- Pet supplies (shampoos, tick and flea treatments)
- Insect repellants
- Rat and rodent control supplies
- Swimming pool supplies
- General use paints, stains, wood preservatives & sealants

In addition, you may continue to use any pesticide for:

- Management of invasive insects (as defined by Maine Forest Service)
- Poison ivy and other poisonous plants
- Tick and mosquito control
- Utility right of way applications

In addition, you may continue to use fertilizers for any of the following:

- Golf course applications provided that the course is designated through Audubon International as a Certified Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary.
- Hadlock Field applications.
- Liquid deep root feeding of trees.

## Are there restrictions on allowed fertilizers and pesticides?

Yes. ALL pesticides are prohibited within 75 feet of a water body or wetland. This includes:

- Ponds
- Rivers
- Streams
- Tidal areas
- Coastal or freshwater wetlands

ALL fertilizer applications are prohibited:

- On frozen ground, impervious, or saturated surfaces;
- When a heavy rain event is forecast or is occurring;
- And when plants are not taking up nutrients, such as during summer dormancy or when the ground is partially or wholly frozen.

## We are here to help.

Portland residents have many local and national resources to assist you in implementing organic land care, a few key resources include:

- **YardScaping.org** outlines ways to manage pests, build healthy soils, and choose native plants specific to Southern Maine
- **BeyondPesticides.org** is a national organization with extensive educational materials
- Consult this **UMaine Cooperative Extension's** Bulletin for solutions to specific issues:  
[extension.umaine.edu/gardening/manual/lawns/](http://extension.umaine.edu/gardening/manual/lawns/)

All of these resources and more can be found on [www.portlandmaine.gov/Landcare](http://www.portlandmaine.gov/Landcare)

If you have any questions about this ordinance, please contact the City of Portland's Sustainability Office at [SustainabilityOffice@portlandmaine.gov](mailto:SustainabilityOffice@portlandmaine.gov)

