

SUMMER, 2001

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Who Are Child's Play, Inc. Customers?

Child's Play customers are people who...

- are concerned about the environmental hazards of synthetic chemical fertilizers and pesticides
- want a beautiful, healthy lawn, but not at the expense of their family or pet's health.
- have made a conscious decision to switch to an environmentally friendly lawn treatment program.



I can't begin to tell you how many people have told us personal stories about how toxic pesticides have adversely impacted their lives. Many of these are quite similar to our own when my wife was chemically poisoned 18 years ago from insecticides being sprayed in our apartment for cockroaches, leaving her permanently affected. We are grateful for the opportunity to serve your lawn care needs and hope you are satisfied with the results.

Just What Is In That Funny Smelling Spray?

Many of you may have noticed that the liquid spray fertilizer has a rather peculiar odor. Admittedly, it is not like walking into a Yankee Candle shop. However, it is a significant improvement over the pungent chemical smell of most traditional synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. What you smell is the fertilizer base – Sugar Beet Molasses. I even had one person recognize the odor from her childhood days on the farm, and another who thought it smelled like silage (cattle feed grown and stored on farms). Well, this is certainly on the right track. The Nature's Weed and Feed® (NWF) is a formulation of 7 different agricultural crop extracts such as sugar beets, alfalfa, and wheat, and was developed by a guy in St. Paul, Minnesota who used to be an organic farmer.

The other product I normally spray is called Liquid Compost® (LC), and is similar to the NWF. It is a by-product of fermented crops, but does not have the weed control ingredients. I use this fertilizer during the early summer treatment, for those of you with 5 application programs, during the late Fall treatment, and on those lawns recently overseeded. It was specifically formulated to enhance root density, stimulate seed germination, and promote disease and drought resistance.

What Have We Learned This First Season?

Probably the single most important thing we have learned is that the natural broadleaf weed control, although visibly effective, is somewhat slower than originally anticipated. The first application of the NWF actually stimulates weed growth (as many of you have pointed out to me!). The second application further stimulates the growth, through increased photosynthesis, to the point where the weeds cannot give off the oxygen fast enough, and weed cell membranes start to rupture. This eventually causes the weed to die.

I have also found out, through research and experience, that the weed control is much more effective on young weeds than on older perennial weeds. However, at worst case, even the older weeds are damaged and start to shrink, and eventually

will die out. In addition, the natural pre-emergent will help to reduce new weed germination in future seasons. So, over time, we will be able to observe steady, continuous improvement in weed populations.

My last major discovery, so far, is that the soil has a lot to do with how well a lawn reacts to a spray treatment, and how long the benefits last. With our sandy soil around here, and all the rain, nutrients are sapped away from grass roots rather quickly. If you have the opportunity to spread about ¼” to ½” of top-soil or compost evenly over your lawn, this will significantly enhance the soil’s ability to retain both nutrients and moisture to feed the turf. If enough of you are interested in pursuing this for your lawn, I will look into this as a service. Just give us a call, write us a note, or email us at childsplaylawns@netzero.net.

Reminder On Mowing And Watering Techniques



Please remember the following tips to obtain the best results for your lawn:

- Set your mower blade at 2 ½” to 3”
- Cut off no more than 1/3 of the blade at a time
- Always mulch your grass clippings! (This adds between 1 and 2 lbs of Nitrogen to the soil during a season)
- Water deep and infrequently – let the ground dry out to a depth of about 3 – 4 inches before watering.

These will promote dense, deep grass root growth, will shade out many weeds, and will promote disease and drought resistance. Try it, you will be pleasantly surprised!

Natural Grub Control (...and Moles??)

Many of you have been asking us about how to control grubs naturally. When I asked the professors at Purdue University this question, they replied that the most effective natural treatment is with Parasitic Nematodes. These are living microorganisms that are like little "heat seeking missiles" which zero in on, and destroy, Japanese Beetle Grubs and Masked Chafer grubs (the two most common grubs in our area) but are not effective on June Beetle Grubs. These Parasitic Nematodes are available from *Garden's Alive*, and is called Grub-Away®. Their web site is www.gardensalive.com, and you can order it on-line.



Now...if you are trying to control grubs because you think that is why your lawn is being torn up by moles, you are going to be disappointed by the results. In actuality, grubs provide only about 25% of a mole's diet. The other 75% is generally earthworms, and we don't want to destroy those!! Unfortunately, the only truly effective way to get rid of moles, that I have found, is with traps.

Pesticide News – Labels: Friends or Foes?

Did the quest for a lush, green lawn kill a University of Michigan-Flint computer science professor? His family thinks so. They've sued the manufacturer of the fertilizer that Raymond Fadous was spreading on his lawn when he collapsed, and they've sued Wal-Mart Stores Inc., where he purchased the fertilizer (Sam's Choice Weed & Feed, 28-3-3), purchased at Wal-Mart. They say both were negligent because neither warned Fadous that he should wear a respirator while applying the fertilizer. Additionally, from *Energy Times*, June 2001, The American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology estimates that 14 to 15 million Americans suffer asthma. "Asthma is an immune response...a deadly disease." From a common pesticide 2,4-D MSDS Sheet, "MEDICAL CONDITIONS AGGRAVATED BY EXPOSURE: Asthma".



With the highest priority being bottom line profits and maximum sales, millions of dollars are spent annually by chemical manufacturers to develop labels that make the product sound as benign as possible. Is it worth the risk???

Quite often I receive emails concerning various happenings in the pesticide world. If you'd like to receive these and other interesting articles just drop us an email at childsplaylawns@netzero.net and we'll add you to the list. 112222cv



How are we doing???

We want to ensure you are satisfied with the level and quality of service, and that we are meeting your expectations. Please take a few moments to let us know what you think, and be as specific as possible. Your specific comments are greatly appreciated, and will be used to improve the service we provide. Please mail to address at bottom of page.

CATEGORY	GoodRATING....bad					COMMENTS
Grass color and thickness	1	2	3	4	5	
Weed control	1	2	3	4	5	
Timing of treatments	1	2	3	4	5	
Our response to your concerns	1	2	3	4	5	
Overall Performance – did we meet your expectations?	1	2	3	4	5	

My favorite thing about *Child's Play Natural/Organic Lawn Service* is:

Child's Play Natural/Organic Lawn Service could improve by:

I will use *Child's Play* again, or recommend *Child's Play* to others: **YES NO**

The following people would be interested in more information about Child's Play Services:

_____	_____	_____	_____
Name	Phone Number	Name	Phone Number

I am interested in the following additional services (from the chart on the back of this page):

Name (optional)

Phone number (optional)

Thank you very much,

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