Fairlington Villages

Ad Hoc Turf Care Alternatives Committee

Report and Recommendations

July 1, 2024

To: Fairlington Villages Board of Directors and Management

From: The Ad Hoc Turf Care Alternatives Committee (TAC)

Date: June 21, 2024

Re: July 1, 2024 Fairlington Villages Board Meeting – TAC Final Recommendations

Attached please find the presentation of final recommendations by TAC. Included is a power point presentation that demonstrates our recommendations and reasoning.

We hope that this information will help you to formulate your questions for Mike Angles of Lancaster. He will attend the July 1 meeting in person to speak about his experiences with Leaf Compost Tea and proposed plans for Fairlington Villages (FV).

Based on providing this in-depth material ahead of the meeting, we will be able to give a briefer presentation of the TAC recommendations and allow plenty of time for questions.

Feedback from the resident Town Hall on Organic Turf Care is also attached, including two particularly pointed comments. The 36 residents who attended in person (and online) indicated interest, support, and enthusiasm for this proposed change to organic, non-toxic turf care in FV. Also included is resident response from the Fairlington Appreciation Society Facebook page.

Finally, we are attaching some reference resources, collected from our research, for your information. This includes our guiding documents, the TAC Charter and Goals 8 and 9 from the FV Strategic Plan. To provide a deeper understanding of key topics, we are also attaching Information Sheets on Soil Health; Leaf Compost Tea; Leaf Mulch, “Green” Mulch and Wood Chips; and Alternative Ground Covers.

We look forward to bringing TAC’s final recommendations for non-toxic, effective, natural alternatives to synthetic petrochemical-based lawn care to the Fairlington Board of Directors.

Sincerely,

Carol McCaffrey and Susan Tatum
TAC Chairpersons

Turf Care Alternatives Committee

REPORT CONTENTS

TAC Report and Recommendations:

- TAC Report with Six Recommendations
- Summary of Report

FV Town Hall on Organic Lawn Care:

- Town Hall Summary
- Community Feedback and Comments

Power Point of TAC Recommendations:

- Images and purpose for key recommendations
- Soil and Turf Grass, Leaf Compost Tea,
  Alternative Plants and Ground Covers
- Supports FV's eco-friendly landscape goals
- Originally presented at Town Hall on Organic Lawn Care

Support Materials:

- Information Sheets – learn more about:
  1) Leaf Compost Tea; 2) Soil Health; 3) Leaf Mulch,
  "Green" Mulch & Wood Chips; 4) Alternative Ground Covers
- FV Strategic Plan – excerpts from Goals 8 and 9
  for eco-friendly, sustainable landscape practices
- TAC Charter

Fairlington Villages Ad Hoc Turf Care Alternatives Committee (TAC)

REPORT TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS – JULY 1, 2024

Background Information:

In response to Fairlington Villages (FV) community concerns about the adverse impact of synthetic lawncare chemicals used in our landscape, the FV Board of Directors "decided against the funding of lawn chemical applications" at its September 2023 meeting. Instead, the Board voted to implement a community-wide chemical pause for the Fall of 2023 and Spring of 2024.

For the past ten years, Fairlington Villages has moved toward chemical reduction, through pilot areas including the Tot Lot and Ward I. In those two pilot areas, all chemical treatments were suspended; however, natural soil and turf enhancements, or regenerative practices, were not incorporated into the test.

With the community-wide suspension of chemical applications, the Board (in cooperation with the Grounds Committee) decided to use this time to investigate natural turf care alternatives. Subsequently, an ad hoc committee to research alternative lawn care practices was formed: The Ad Hoc Turf Care Alternatives Committee (TAC).

The Turf Care Alternatives Committee Charter:

Effective October 13, 2023, Board President Torres chartered the Ad Hoc Committee on Turf Care Alternatives (TAC) to research lawn care alternatives to chemical applications, including but not limited to:

- Improving soil quality
- Ground cover alternatives for areas not conducive to healthy grass
- Input from other communities dealing with challenges
- Resources available from experts in residential lawn care
- Evaluating current turf treatment pilot areas in Fairlington Villages
- Cost and practicality factors of using alternative fertilizer, weed and disease control practices

Overview of TAC and recommendations:

To fulfill the Charter, TAC identified six key areas for change. The six recommendations in this proposal are based on TAC's research, meetings, review of the no-chemical pilots, and five walks through the grounds with landscape experts.

The recommendations are practical and cost effective today and have the potential to reduce costs over time. TAC worked closely with management and the contractor, Lancaster Landscapes, during their development.

These recommendations feature non-toxic, organic practices that would work to naturally improve the soil and turf with benefits to the value, health, and beauty of FV's grounds. Through restored soil health, turf grass will become denser, and able to thrive long-term. Healthy turf will naturally crowd out weeds to eliminate, or greatly reduce, the need for weed control. The practices could also benefit the landscaped beds of FV.

The suggested practices – which include rehabilitating soil, also address erosion, and planting site-appropriate alternative plants—that would reduce the amount and intensity of storm water runoff into the three watersheds surrounding FV. Healthy soil is like a sponge to store water and it also purifies run-off contamination.

The first recommendation, the use of Leaf Compost Tea instead of synthetic fertilizer, has extensive benefits, as are detailed within this proposal. Furthermore, it may only be needed every few years after the initial two startup applications. Its use, process and benefits contrast significantly with the use of synthetic chemicals, which provide short term results by killing weeds or greening grass, must be reapplied multiple times per year, and do nothing to rehabilitate the soil.

In Alignment with FV Strategic Plan-- Goals 8 and 9:

The TAC recommendations align with FV's Strategic Plan goals and continue the community's progress toward environmentally sustainable landscape best practices.

Regarding Strategic Goal 8: The TAC recommendations focus on maintaining FV grounds in an environmentally beneficial manner that is economically viable and maximizes the appearance and health of the turf, soil and tree canopy, as well as native and designed landscapes – as described in FV's Strategic Plan Goal 8, Objective 2 (Oct. 2021). Attractive, healthy turf and grounds will continue to showcase the historic architecture and curb appeal of our community.

Regarding Strategic Goal 9: Some chemical-based practices that have been used in the past are now recognized through science to be harmful to regeneration of the soil and to the environment (biodiversity, water, air). The TAC recommendations embrace organic and natural practices to support the environment holistically. These recommendations will assist FV in stewarding its landscape toward the future using "environmentally sensitive landscaping practices" which "protect our local streams, flora and fauna," as per FV Strategic Plan 2019, Goal 9, Objective 1.

Alignment with Environmental Practices Checklist: These recommendations also align with the Fairlington Villages Environmentally Sustainable Landscaping Practices Checklist dated June 4, 2022.

THE SIX TAC RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION #1 - LEAF COMPOST TEA

Use non-chemical, organic Leaf Compost Tea to improve the growing conditions of all FV turf, property-wide, beginning in Fall 2024.

TAC reviewed the benefits, feasibility, availability, and costs of a variety of non-chemical alternatives for turf care, including "do nothing" (Ward 1 Pilot). Leaf Compost Tea was selected for its effectiveness and affordability.

What is Leaf Compost Tea:

Leaf Compost Tea is an organic, water-based treatment that restores the soil health (Soil Web of Life), by providing natural nutrients and microorganisms to the soil, which then supports turf growth and health through its living ecosystem. Leaf Compost Tea is derived from decomposed leaf debris, after being processed by adding water in an agitator to create a brine very high in organic nutrients.

Why use Leaf Compost Tea:

- With Leaf Compost Tea, the result is thicker, healthy turf that naturally fills in bare areas, crowds-out weeds, and is more disease and drought resistant.
- A key difference between Leaf Compost Tea and synthetic chemical fertilizers is that Leaf Compost Tea feeds and regenerates the soil itself. The regenerated soil then continuously feeds the turf for long-term benefits. By contrast, synthetics feed the grass only, not the soil. Synthetic chemicals are not a long-term solution, and risk harm to the soil itself and its microbiome.
- The micro and macro nutrients from Leaf Compost Tea aid in the proliferation of beneficial microorganisms within the soil. This also aids in stabilizing the soil's pH and improves water retention capacity in soil.
- Healthy soil retains water in place, to better provide water to plants during drought times and to aid in the prevention of run-off during rains.

The Safety of Leaf Compost Tea:

- Water-based Leaf Compost Tea is spray-applied, absorbs deeply into the soil, and dries quickly
- It can be walked upon immediately
- It cannot be over-applied, there is no toxicity risk
- It is not harmful to people, pets, plants, or other animal life
- It is safe for the microbiome in the soil, and supports its health

Lancaster Landscape's Experience with Leaf Compost Tea:

Lancaster Landscapes can support the application of Leaf Compost Tea property-wide in conjunction with currently contracted aeration and overseeding, plus the addition of a second aeration in Spring 2025.

- The Leaf Compost Tea protocol can be built into the FY 2025 budget and would save money over time by replacing twice yearly herbicide and fertilizer application costs for biennial or triennial Leaf Compost Tea application costs. The frequency of applications would be determined through comprehensive soil test results.
- Lancaster Landscapes has been using Leaf Compost Tea on several properties in Maryland to positive effect for years. This includes a community in Maryland that has been chemical free for 7 years using Leaf Compost Tea. It should be noted that Montgomery County, Maryland, has banned the use of synthetic petrochemical-based turf maintenance products.
- As more communities, here and around the country, have been moving away from synthetic chemical landscape care, the demand for organic alternatives has increased. As a result, the supply of organics has increased, and the cost has come down.

Please read the enclosed "Information Sheet on Leaf Compost Tea" in our resources section for a full explanation of how it works and its benefits.

Also see the "Information Sheet on Soil" in our resources section for an explanation of how soil is key to healthy turf and to the overall environment.

RECOMMENDATION #2 - SELECTIVE SPOT TREATMENT OF WEEDS

Use Fiesta (chelated iron) for a selective spot treatment of weeds, only where needed based on surveying property, to support initial use of Leaf Compost Tea

To support healthy turf grass growing conditions with Leaf Compost Tea, some initial spot weed treatment will be needed in limited, specifically identified areas where weeds have taken over. For this purpose, Lancaster Landscapes recommends Fiesta (chelated iron). Healthy turf will ultimately crowd out weeds on its own, because dense turf grass outcompetes weeds.

- Before first use of Leaf Compost Tea, use Fiesta to "knock back" weeds in areas identified as "densely weeded"
- Apply Fiesta judiciously, only for spot treatments
- Fiesta will not be applied broadly over the turf, but only selectively
- This spot weed-clearing will support the subsequent success of Leaf Compost Tea application

Fiesta, or another non-toxic weed control, may subsequently be needed in areas of recurring weed growth, such as along sidewalks, buildings or other heat-producing/weed-encouraging sites.

SCHEDULE AND PROTOCOL FOR USING LEAF COMPOST TEA

Following two start up applications – Fall 24 and Spring 25 – Leaf Compost Tea will only be applied when comprehensive soil tests indicate that the soil's health is in need of another boost of the nutrients and micro- and macro-organisms in Leaf Compost Tea. At that point, when an additional application is needed, it will only be done once per year. The soil will not need an application of Leaf Compost Tea in Fall 25 or Spring 26. There might be years between subsequent needed applications.

The soil's health will continue to regenerate and improve naturally between applications – while the turf will continue to improve in appearance and health, including the natural crowding out of weeds, as a result.

Fall 2024

- Comprehensive Soil Tests to be done around FV Property
- Areas identified as needing spot weed control with Fiesta to be treated
- Aeration of turf
- First application of Leaf Compost Tea
- Over-seeding of turf

Spring 2025

- Aeration of turf
- Second application of Leaf Compost Tea

Fall 2025

- No application needed of Leaf Compost Tea

Spring 2026

- No application needed of Leaf Compost Tea

Fall 2026

- Comprehensive soil tests to be done to determine if another application of Leaf Compost Tea is needed, or not yet needed

RECOMMENDATION #3 - PRACTICES TO SUPPORT NON-CHEMICAL TURF CARE

Revise or adjust current lawn maintenance schedule and practices, as needed, to support improvement of turf appearance and resilience.

Add, or continue, flexible mowing, mulching fall leaves into the turf, and other practices to support non-chemical turf care: e.g. mow earlier in Spring and/or less often during hottest months, raised blade height, etc.

Mower Blade height:

- Continue to follow the Lancaster-recommended practice of setting blade height at 4.5 inches

Mowing Frequency:

- Conduct fewer cuts during the hottest season (July and August). Lancaster recommends changing the time between cuts from the current 7–10-day interval to 12–14-day intervals
- This will reduce injury to the turf grass blades during the part of the season that is most stressful to turf
- Savings from reduced mowing costs can be applied to switching to organics

Maintenance Schedule:

- Management to work with the landscape contractor to adjust mowing, mulching and selective turf weed control schedules to account for variable weather conditions and spring weed growth

RECOMMENDATION #4 – USE OF TURF ALTERNATIVES

Use Turf Alternatives where turf grass cannot grow well – such as in deep shade, on hillsides that are steep, or slopes with severe erosion and/or compacted soil. Alternatives can include low growing plants, spreading herbaceous ground covers, "no mow" fescues, "green mulch," and/or wood chips or leaf mulch.

This recommendation is a result of TAC's Walk and Learns and research. It has many facets and would need to be taken up by the Grounds Committee, Management, and/or another Ad Hoc committee for site-specific recommendations.

The benefits of Ground Covers Include: They are aesthetically pleasing, suppress weeds and can fill in the bottom layer of landscapes. They reduce erosion and run-off. They improve soil health and provide habitat for beneficial insects. Many ground covers are already in use in FV and can be expanded.

Please see the "Information Sheet on Alternative Ground Covers" in our resources section for more insights on their benefits to the soil and landscape.

Examples of Ground Cover Plants:

- Green and gold, Christmas fern, Coral Bells, Barren Strawberry, native sedges, native violets and clover – plus many more native options are available for all planting conditions

"Green Mulch" or "Living Mulch":

- Live, low-growing plants that do the work of wood mulch
- A dense layer of compatible plants tightly woven together to cool the soil, reduce runoff, and prevent weed takeovers
- Their roots work to aerate compacted soil over time

Wood Chips and Leaf mulch:

- Wood chips can fill in areas where turf cannot thrive and reduce erosion
- They regenerate the soil as they decompose by adding nutrients, organic matter and fiber
- Leaf mulch protects bare earth spots to cool it and restore nutrients

Mulch Under Trees:

- Since turf and trees need different soil factors for health, increase mulch or chopped leaf rings underneath trees to be closer to the drip line
- This protects the tree roots from foot traffic
- As the mulch breaks down over time, its nutrients will enhance soil health

Please see the "Information Sheet on Leaf Mulch, Green Mulch and Wood Chips" in our resources section for a full explanation of their purpose and benefits.

Create "No-mow" Areas:

On areas where turf won't grow or mowing is difficult, such as hillsides, medians, property edges, no-mow zones are an effective, attractive alternative that require low-maintenance.

- Use plants with visual interest that only need to be mowed once or twice per year
- Red fescue, as seen on the rough of golf courses
- Eco-Grass, a low growing, drought tolerant mix of fescues, creates a carpet of turf grass that only needs infrequent mowing
- Planting to encourage wildflower meadows

Native and/or Pollinator Gardens in Key Locations:

Use native plantings (shrubs, perennials, etc.) where turf alternatives would be more beneficial to the topography than grass. Native plants add beauty, support pollinators and send down deep roots to aerate and regenerate the soil, and reduce erosion.

- Hillside gardens to help hold soil in place to reduce run-off and erosion
- Rain gardens to help collect and reduce storm water run-off
- Pollinator-friendly plants in hillside, rain or other special purpose gardens

RECOMMENDATION #5 – ESTABLISH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Establish new policies and procedures, as needed, so as to implement, monitor and maintain the recommended new practices.

Protocols:

- Develop with contractor protocols and timing for periodic soil testing, Leaf Compost Tea applications, flexible mowing, mulching, and weeding, and any other needed maintenance schedules

Monitoring Plan:

- Monitor the grounds to measure the effectiveness of the new practices
- Assess regularly (at least annually) to identify areas that require additional measures to improve soil and/or turf health

Define New Organic Practices:

- Define organic/natural practices as an expectation going forward by including them as part of the next RFP for landscape services that is written

RECOMMENDATION #6 – CREATE COMMUNITY EDUCATION RESOURCES

Provide ongoing educational opportunities for the FV community to learn more about organic lawn care and its benefits, and FV's environmental stewardship.

This can include:

- Speaker events and quarterly documentary movie nights on these topics
- Newsletter articles and notices on Town Square
- Shared online resources or web videos
- Notice of lecture opportunities from MGNV, and similar organization

SUMMARY OF TAC REPORT

TAC's recommendations offer effective, non-toxic, chemical-free alternatives to Fairlington Villages turf care management practices. They are practical, cost-effective, and can be implemented through our current landscape contract.

They align with our stewardship responsibility by improving the quality of our community's soil, turf, grounds, and environment overall. They also add value to the property and the quality of life for our residents.

Leaf Compost Tea is affordable. It will work to enhance the beauty, health and density of our turf. The landscape can be further benefited by implementing Turf Alternatives recommendations.

The feedback is positive – from residents, the Grounds Committee, and Management, as well as Lancaster Landscapes, concerning Leaf Compost Tea for organic turf care.

Environmental, health and well-being benefits – The recommendations will support biodiversity and enhance the overall appearance and health of FV's landscape and environment. A healthy landscape directly contributes to the physical and mental health, and well-being, of residents, pets, and wildlife.

Enjoyment benefits – The confidence that FV turf is chemical-free and safe to enjoy, will encourage residents to take full advantage of Fairlington Villages' green space for more outdoor activities and leisurely recreation.

Organic turf care and Leaf Compost Tea have community support in FV, and beyond. Residents throughout Fairlington Villages, as well as south Fairlington communities, are expressing interest and support for chemical-free, safe organic lawn care. As a further testament, at least 20 FV residents have participated on the TAC team since it began, attending meetings or Walk and Learn sessions, and/or helping with research.
Ten residents have sustained active engagement throughout the duration of the work.

The Town Hall showed clear support for this change. See the Town Hall Report to read about it *(directly after this section)* and to see compelling comments from residents.

TAC is excited to bring this positive change to the Board. The TAC team is confident that implementing our recommendations – the use of Leaf Compost Tea, and additional recommendations – will result in compounding benefits to Fairlington Villages. It will be heading in a good direction – for FV's soil and landscape, the turf itself – and of direct value to our residents (human and animal).

TOWN HALL & COMMUNITY SUPPORT – ORGANIC TURF CARE

On 6/11/24, the resident Town Hall on Organic Turf Care drew strong attendance and revealed that a change to organic turf care is supported. Thirty-six residents attended with 25 people on site and 11 online.

Using a Power Point presentation, TAC addressed the critical importance of soil health to turf health and how Leaf Compost Tea naturally benefits both. The presentation included TAC's process to research and reach its recommendations, including those related to alternatives where turf is not viable. Resident questions and comments indicated clear interest and support for TAC's proposal. There were no expressions of concern or disagreement from attendees, nor protestations toward the plan.

Here are two comments from residents, that encapsulate the support for this change:

> Good evening,
>
> I just attended the Town Hall hosted by the Turf Care Committee. I don't have any major questions at this time. I just wanted to share my three main take-aways as comments.
>
> 1. I am so glad to hear about this proposed change for the sake of my family. As a mom of a toddler and a soon-to-be newborn, I'm relieved to know my kids and their little buddies can literally roll in the grass safely.
>
> 2. As a biology teacher, I'm glad to hear the use of organic leaf compost tea has been proven to work so well and we can start using it here. This is basically what I've been teaching students for close to 20 years, but without it being locally applicable. Now it finally will be.
>
> 3. I also want to second the comment made that we shouldn't aim for a golf course within our neighborhood, but a healthy lawn. I remember my lawn growing up having plenty of clover and dandelions and fireflies as a kid, and that was not a problem at all! My daughter this Spring loved picking dandelions and watching the bees buzz from clover to clover. I know there are some who are basically offended by the site of these things, but to me they are delightful. And oh how I miss fireflies, too! I look forward to a more natural and healthy lawn for my children right here in Fairlington so we can enjoy such simple pleasures, too.
>
> Thank you!

And this:

> I attended the meeting Tuesday night discussing the proposed changes to turf management, and the plan seems like a no-brainer to me – didn't sound like there was any downside. I'll plan to be there July 1 in support, and I hope the board will vote to start the new treatment this fall.
>
> As a cancer survivor and a parent of young kids, thank you to the Ad Hoc committee for finding a safe solution to keep our grounds beautiful (and help the fireflies)!

In reaction to a post about the FV Town Hall on Organic Turf Care, and TAC's recommendations for using Leaf Compost Tea, to date almost 100 "Like" or "Love" reactions have been posted on the Fairlington Appreciation Facebook page, along with positive comments.

Over the duration of TAC's work, as community awareness has increased about its research to stop using synthetic chemicals in FV's landscape – and to find Organic Alternatives – we have heard only support and a great welcoming for this change.

It began with the community-wide chemical pause instituted this past Fall.

- Pet owners have expressed relief that they no longer have protect their animals from chemicals on the turf.
- Parents have relaxed knowing their children can freely play on the grass.
- Environmentalists have been grateful to realize that beneficial insects and other wildlife are not being exposed to these chemicals, above or below ground.
- People who simply appreciate beautiful turf are excited to learn how the practice of using Leaf Compost Tea to regenerate the soil will result in nicer, healthier grass.

Admirers of fireflies have been delighted to notice an increase in their presence this year – just from the chemical pause, and hope to see many more fireflies as the soil regenerates further and plant life abounds with greater health.

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October 2023
TAC Charter Goals and Process

Research alternatives to lawn chemicals.

Consider:
- Soil quality issues
- Ground cover alternatives where healthy grass won't grow
- Cost and practicality of using alternative practices

Utilize:
- Input from other communities dealing with challenges
- Resources from experts in residential lawn care

Evaluate:
- Lessons learned from FV's turf treatment pilot areas

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Fairlington Villages Strategic Plan, 2019

Goal 9: Enhance the Sustainability, Safety, and Appearance of the Community's Grounds

Objective #1:

- Follow cost-efficient and environmentally sensitive landscaping practices to
- Conserve financial and natural resources
- Mediate diverse owner and tenant interests, and
- Protect our local streams, flora, and fauna.

TAC's recommendations are a continuation of Fairlington Villages commitment to sustainable landscaping practices.

3

Here are a few of Fairlington Villages Sustainability Benchmarks

Audubon-designated landscape and rain garden, circa 1990.

Community Center/ Tot Lot Chemicals Pause Circa 2013

2019 Shade Pilot

2024 Native Ground Covers, Parking lot renovations

2022 Ward One Chemicals Pause

Circa 2020's Biologs

4

TAC Process

- Invited residents to participate on the committee
- 20 volunteers from across all 6 wards
- Met monthly December – April
- Met weekly since May
- 5 “Walk and Learn” sessions with experts
- Reviewed information from Master Gardeners, Plant NoVA Natives, VA Extension, many others

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Following our Charter, TAC consulted with neighboring communities and local experts

Erik Hildreth, Professional Grounds Inc, managing Fairlington Glen

David Sachs, Arlington Friends of Urban Agriculture, & Organic Farmer

Kirstin Conrad, VaTech Extension Agent & Director FCC

Grace Tyus, Environmental Enhancements, Inc. managing Fairlington Mews, Arbor and Court Bridge I & II

Mike Angles and Carlos Rios, Lancaster Landscapes, managing Fairlington Villages

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Lessons learned from past trials

- Turf grass free of synthetic lawn chemicals are healthier for humans, pets and wildlife; and some areas look fine without treatment
- Due to existing poor soil conditions, erosion and bare areas, weeds can become opportunistic in those areas and gain a foothold
- Beyond avoiding synthetic lawn chemicals, we must now work to improve growing conditions with organic solutions

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TAC Results

TAC identified a safe, affordable, effective alternative: Leaf Compost Tea. Turf appearance will improve as soil health improves. Some changes in practices will support this alternative.

- Safety - Natural, non-toxic alternative to synthetic petrochemical-based lawn chemicals
- Appearance – Enhanced as health of the turf and soil improves
- Affordability – The new practices would fit within the budget
- Landscape contractor has valuable and positive experience with this practice
- Supported by Management

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TAC Results, continued

In addition: There are some places where turf will not grow well.

- Deep shade under trees or between buildings
- Compacted soil from runoff or high foot traffic
- Eroded hillsides

Here alternative ground covers are recommended versus trying to grow grass.

We will describe some of these alternatives later in the presentation.

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WHY ORGANICS?

NON-TOXIC
For the safety and health of our families, pets and the environment

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APPEARANCE
Turf becomes more lush and enhances curb appeal and property value





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AFFORDABLE
It's within our budget range and costs might be reduced over time





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To have healthy plants and turf grass...

It's all about THE SOIL

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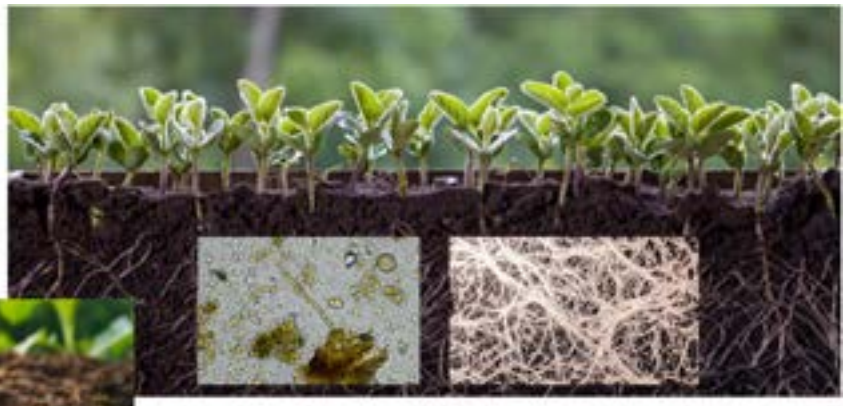
Healthy soil is teeming with life...

It's a huge ECOSYSTEM



With worms and insects – and billions of microscopic creatures in every inch of soil! Fungi that can be over a mile long – in just a handful of healthy soil. Air, water, minerals...

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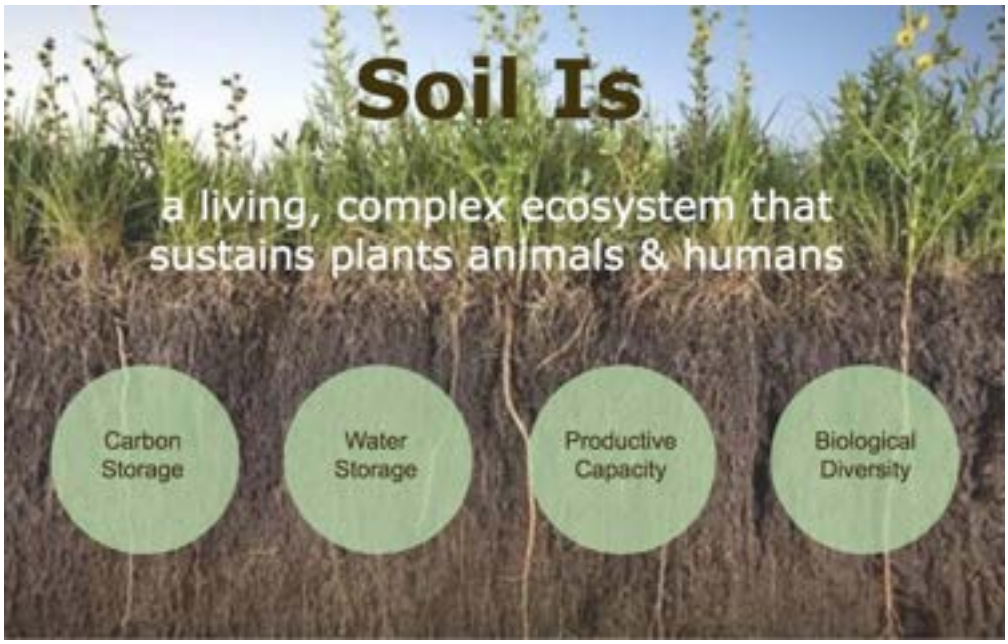

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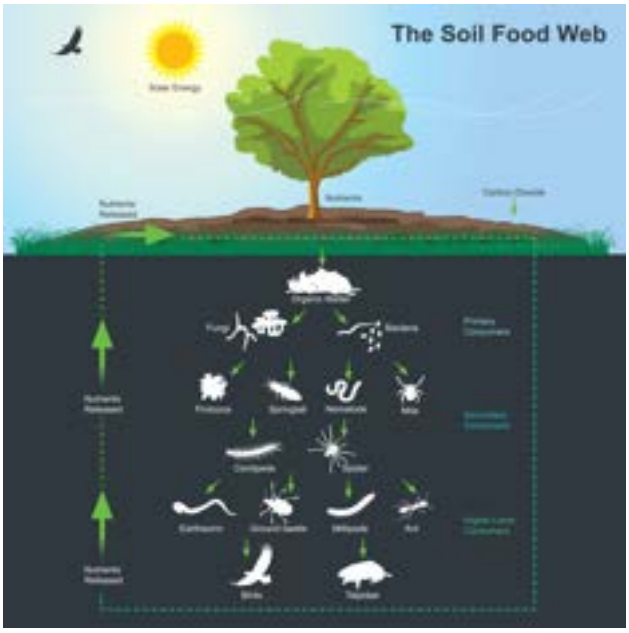
Nature's way to build healthy soil

"Soil is the foundation for life on earth. It provides habitat, recycles wastes, provides structural and nutritional support as well as air and water needed for plants, and ultimately, all life to thrive." (Ralph Morini, Piedmont Master Gardeners)

- Organisms living all or part of their lives in the soil, plus organic matter
- Generate the energy for ALL food webs
- Convert nitrogen to plant-usable form and contain the nutrients plants need to survive
- AND… supports all the rest of life, too!



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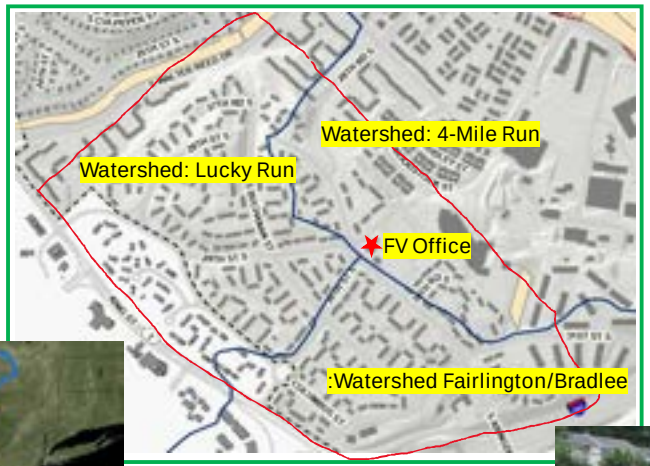
Healthy soil acts like a sponge

- Purifies and reduces runoff
- Stores water
- Holds nutrients
- Moderates soil temperature



Four Mile Run

Chesapeake Bay Watershed

Fairlington Villages is in the middle of Three Watersheds

Lucky Run

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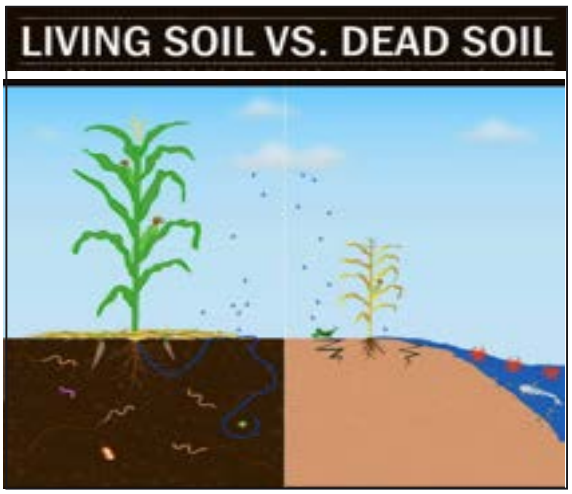
Living soil:

- Is teeming with life
- Holds water and nutrients in place
- Supports plant health and the whole Soil Food Web

Dead (depleted) soil:

- Is compacted; run-off occurs
- No nutrients to support bio life
- Does not support plant life
- Devoid of active bio life



Using organic lawn care brings the soil "back to life"

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Differences between Organic and Synthetic Chemical lawn care...

Organics "feed the soil" to regenerate soil life –
for a long-term solution

- Treat the cause of the problem – not the symptoms
- Take an ecosystem-based approach
- Provide living organic nourishment the soil needs
- Create a biologically active environment where plants and the Soil Food Web system can thrive
- Water-based – absorbs deeply into soil
- Organics *"work with nature"*

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Differences between Organic and Synthetic Chemical lawn care...

Synthetic Chemical Fertilizers *"feed the plant"* –
for a short-term solution

- Treat the symptoms, not the cause
- Gives a temporary, short-term fix
- Must be applied by the calendar, repeatedly
- Non-organic, product-based, often petrochemical
- Petrochemicals – risk of harmful run-off
- Can lead to degradation of soil & harm to bio life

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So what do we recommend?

ORGANIC LEAF COMPOST TEA

What's in it?

- Decomposed leaf debris – mixed with water to make a liquid "tea" very rich in organic nutrients
- Its micro and macro nutrients "wake up" dormant organics in soil
- And "brings it to life" with a proliferation of beneficial microorganisms that regenerate the soil's health

All the ingredients are natural –
there's no risk of over-applying or over-dosing it

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Leaf Compost Tea will help to "heal our soil" and support our turf health

- The "tea's" organic nutrients will feed the turf through healthy, renewed organic life in the soil
- It will improve soil structure, water retention, and nutrient uptake
- It supports plant health and the organisms that fight plant disease
- Turf plant roots will grow more deeply, receiving needed nourishment

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It promotes “healthy roots” – healthy roots equal healthy grass

Leaf Compost Tea

- Feeds the soil
- Soil organisms protect roots

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But What About Weeds?

- Weeds love bare spots & poor soil
- Healthy, thick turf crowds weeds out
- Leaf Compost Tea will help the soil & grass thrive to fill in the bare spots

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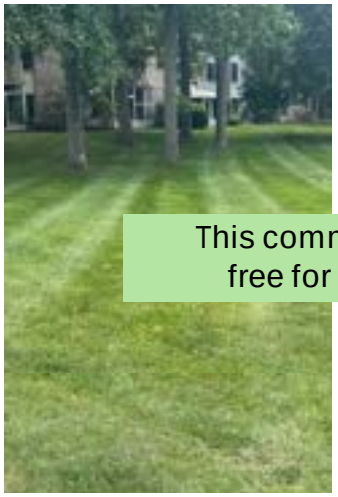
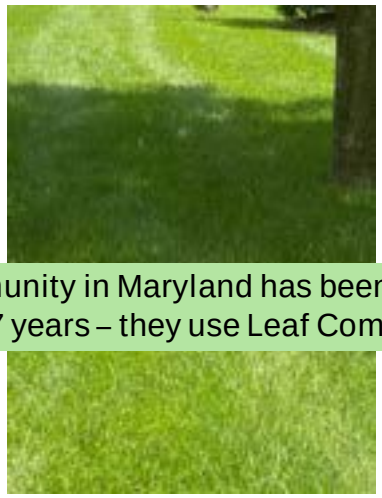
Does Leaf Compost Tea really work?





This community in Maryland has been chemical-free for 7 years – they use Leaf Compost Tea

25

The Process for Using Leaf Compost Tea

In Fall of 2024

The first application will be done

- Comprehensive Soil Tests are done re: baseline soil conditions
- Spot treatment on weeds where needed with chelated iron
- Aeration of soil plus overseeding
- Leaf Compost Tea applied on turf

In Spring of 2025

The second application will be done

- Aeration of soil - no overseeding
- Leaf Compost Tea applied on turf

In Fall 2025 and Spring 2026

- No Leaf Compost Tea will be needed in the second year

26

The Process for Using Leaf Compost Tea, cont'd

In Year Three

- A single (once per year) application might be used, based on soil test results
- It might not be needed yet

In Years after that…

- It may be needed every few years, based on soil tests
- Using a single application in those years

Since Leaf Compost Tea helps regenerate the soil, and soil life comes alive, it means regular "tea" applications are not needed

The healthy soil and Soil Food Web are now doing the work – naturally

27

LEAF COMPOST TEA is safe to walk on right away!

It's completely non-toxic, natural and healthful – both above ground and below

28

There's also no risk to life below the ground.

Many insects, begin life underground. Fireflies spend TWO YEARS in the soil – before they arrive above.

29

Leaf compost tea will benefit the soil throughout our community

Both where grass grows well…

and where it struggles

30

We have many areas where growing conditions just aren't conducive to growing healthy grass, for example:

- Deep shade
- Hillside erosion



31

- Areas with poor drainage and compacted soil




32

- Surface roots
- Heavy foot traffic

33

- Hillsides that are too steep to mow without damaging turf

34

How do we manage these problem areas?

35

There are many good Alternative Ground Covers that we can use:

- Barren Strawberry
- Plantain Sedge
- Ostrich Ferns
- Native Violets

36

- Green and Gold
- Native Mounding Grasses
- Christmas Fern
- Coral Bells

37

- "Eco-lawn" – a fescue hybrid that needs mowing only once a year, and is recommended for steep hillsides

38

- Clover – although not a native, the white clover in our grass is beneficial…

  The roots produce nitrogen, one of the most important nutrients for healthy turf

Bon Air Rose Garden, Wilson Blvd

39

Working together…

- with organic Leaf Compost Tea to regenerate the health of our soil and turf grass
- plus Turf Alternatives where they are needed

will bring us closer to FV's goal of an eco-friendly, sustainable and beautiful landscape

Hillside native plants garden in Fairlington Villages

40

Thank you for joining us!

Here is another look at Leaf Compost Tea at work

Photos by Mike Angles, Lancaster Landscapes

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Turf Care Alternatives Committee

ADDITIONAL RECOURCES

TAC Recommendations – Information Sheets:

- **Leaf Compost Tea**
- **Soil Health**
- **Mulch, “Green” Mulch & Woodchips**
- **Alternative Ground Covers**

Background Materials:

- **Fairlington Villages Strategic Plan (excerpts from Goal #8 and #9)**
- **TAC Charter**

LEAF COMPOST TEA – INFORMATION SHEET
Turf Care Alternatives Committee

WHAT IS LEAF COMPOST TEA

Leaf Compost Tea is derived from decomposed leaves, which is processed into "tea" by adding water in an agitator to create a brine very high in organic nutrients. It is then applied as a liquid onto the turf. The "tea's" micro and macro nutrients promote the proliferation of beneficial soil microorganisms. This also aids in stabilizing the soil's pH and improves its water retention capacity. Leaf Compost Tea is considered the third "tool" in the soil food web gardener's shed – the other two being compost and mulches.

HOW DOES IT WORK

Leaf Compost Tea serves to regenerate the soil itself, which in turn feeds plant life, in a compounding manner. Healthy soil is the foundation for healthy turf. Over time, healthy turf in healthy soil will greatly reduce, and perhaps eliminate, the presence of weeds. Dense, healthy turf naturally crowds out weeds. Thus, Fairlington Village's need for turf weed treatments will be markedly diminished. Additionally, Leaf Compost Tea is well absorbed into the soil and its nutrients will stay in place, reducing run-off into the watershed and other areas. It doesn't burn plant roots or leaves, and the microbiology in the tea will adjust to nutrients available at the site so repeated applications are not harmful.

By contrast, synthetic or petrochemical-based lawn applications can create short-term benefits to lessen weed growth and promote greener grass, but they do not rehabilitate the soil itself. Ergo the need for repeated annual applications. Some can also be harmful to people, pets, and pollinators.

WHY DOES IT MATTER

Both compost and mulch take a while to reach the rhizosphere of soil where regeneration occurs. They have an important role to play; however, to stimulate beneficial microbes to improve the soil that will then improve turf, an *aerobic* option is necessary. Leaf compost tea is an aerobic mixture that is safe, efficient, cost effective, and easy to apply. It is sprayed directly onto turf, preferably before 10 am or after 3 pm. Exposure to Leaf Compost Tea immediately after application does not harm people, pets, or wildlife, including pollinators. Leaf compost tea goes to work immediately.

A further boon to using Leaf Compost Tea can be application in areas in our landscape where grass has struggled and looks sparse, as on eroding hillsides or slopes that have sun exposure. Leaf Compost Tea can rehabilitate the soil and support restored turf

growth that, in turn, will reduce erosion and run-off, and enhance the appearance of the landscape.

HOW FAIRLINGTON VILLAGES CAN HELP

Support the broad use of Leaf Compost Tea on turf. Along with a healthier, more beautiful turf and landscape, FV also will be able to take pride in advancing our progressive land stewardship practices to include natural, non-synthetic turf care that is regenerating the soil, for the benefit of residents, pets, and wildlife, as well as the larger environment and watershed.

RESOURCES

Lowenfels, Jeff and Wayne Lewis, TEAMING WITH MICROBES: THE ORGANIC GARDENER'S GUIDE TO THE SOIL FOOD WEB, REVISED EDITION. Portland, Oregon, Timber Press 2010

Compost Tea Forum. http://groups.yahoo.com/group/compost_tea/.

Ingham, E., THE COMPOST TEA BREWING MANUAL. Soil Foodweb, Inc. Corvallis, Ore http://www.soilfoodweb.com 2000

SOIL HEALTH – INFORMATION SHEET
Turf Care Alternatives Committee

WHAT IS SOIL HEALTH?

Healthy soil is a living breathing ecosystem, home to billions of bacteria, fungi, and other organisms that, together, create an intricate symbiotic system essential to the survival of all living things. This biologically active, porous medium is teeming with life, much of which we cannot see because it is happening underground. Without healthy soil, nothing grows well.

HOW IT WORKS

Healthy soil regulates water flow, filters and buffers pollutants, cycles nutrients, and provides physical stability. It is composed of about 45% minerals, 25% water, 5% organic matter, and 25% air. Natural processes in the soil are responsible for about 60% of the available nitrogen and 50% of available phosphorus. One teaspoon of healthy soil contains 100 million to 1 billion individual good bacteria, representing the greatest concentration of biomass on the planet! Separate strands of mycorrhizal fungi can total more than 1 mile in just a handful of healthy soil.[1] Soil is amazing!

WHY IT MATTERS

Supporting healthy soil allows gardeners and landscapers to manage turf and gardens so they are more productive, more cost effective, and demand less maintenance. By using practices that support soil health, we can reduce and often eliminate the need for fertilizers, herbicides, fungicides, and pesticides as well as the cost and labor those require. The soil will do most of the work if we nurture it. Over time, much of the soil throughout Fairlington Villages has become compacted and depleted through heavy traffic from human use, machinery, chemical applications, and insufficient attention to the principles of soil health.

HOW FAIRLINGTON VILLAGES CAN HELP

The Turf Alternatives Committee (TAC) recommends restoring the soil health by eliminating chemicals and applying best organic practices as highlighted in Recommendations Report. Respect this amazing resource and foster practices that restore and retain its health so it, in turn, keeps the ecosystem functioning and thriving:

- **Protect soil habitat -** Minimize disturbances and maximize cover. Tilling, for example, kills key components of the soil web and creates greater day/night

[1] USDA NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE, SOIL SCIENCE

- temperature fluctuations. It also brings earthworms, a vital part of the soil web, to the surface where
- they are subject to predators such as birds. A healthy soil should be teeming with earthworms, as well as organisms we cannot detect without special equipment. Reducing or eliminating tilling can also save energy and related costs. Use living plants or plant residues such as organic compost and mulch to keep soil covered. Use only non-chemical products that allow soil to breathe.
- **Energize it with diversity** - Soil health depends on a diversity of plantings to mimic soil building and microbial-friendly conditions.
- **Maximize living roots** - Increasing the time living roots are in the soil will stimulate below ground activity. Feed the organisms that inhabit the soil.

USDA NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE, SOIL SCIENCE, USDA 2023

RESOURCES

- Jeff Lowenfels and Wayne Lewis, TEAMING WITH MICROBES: THE ORGANIC GARDENER'S GUIDE TO THE SOIL FOOD WEB, 2010 edition
- Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia, mgnv.org.
- Nardi, James B., LIFE IN THE SOIL: A GUIDE FOR NATURALISTS AND GARDENERS 2007
- USBG, LANDSCAPE FOR LIFE, landscapeforlife.org
- USDA NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE, SOIL SCIENCE
- William Bryant Logan, DIRT: THE ECSTATIC SKIN OF THE EARTH

LEAF MULCH, 'GREEN" MULCH AND WOOD CHIPS – INFORMATION SHEET
Turf Care Alternatives Committee

WHAT IS MULCH?

Mulch is any natural material, such as decaying leaves, bark, or compost used to cover soil's surface. Organic mulches including leaf mulch, wood chips and green mulch also add nutrients to the soil. The ideal mulch is economical, readily available, *chemical-free*, and easily applied and removed; stays in place well; and supplies organic matter to the soil, yet is free of noxious weeds, insects, and diseases. Its three primary functions are to suppress weeds, conserve soil water, and moderate soil temperatures.

WHY ORGANIC MULCH, INCLUDING "GREEN "MULCH, MATTERS

Mulch is a key means of regenerating poor soil to health and maintaining healthy soil. Organic mulch breaks down into soil over time, adding nutrients. In one study comparing various mulch materials with bare soil, soil moisture percentages in mulched plots were approximately twice as high, summer soil temperatures were reduced by 8 to 13 degrees, and the average amount of time required to remove weeds was reduced by two-thirds.[2] "Green" mulch also provides wildlife habitat.

TYPES OF ORGANIC MULCHES

Mulches most frequently used in urban landscapes, and TAC-recommended for Fairlington Villages (FV) are **"green" mulch, organic leaf mulch, and wood chips**:

- **"Green" Mulch or "Living" Mulch** uses live plants to do the work of wood mulch. It can simply be lots of plants, dense layers, and compatible plant communities tightly woven together to cool the soil, reduce runoff, and prevent weed takeovers. In addition to the benefits of other organic mulches "green mulch" offers habitat for wildlife. Aesthetically, using a mass of ground level plants, can make a garden bed look tied together and more cohesive. For areas where curb appeal is important, "green mulch" can better tie-in with dominant landscapes around it.[3]
- **Organic Leaf Mulch** is produced by allowing leaves, grass and other materials to decay. It is most frequently seen throughout FV around shrubs, plants, and tree rings. It is cost-effective and can be used almost universally. It may, however, wash away in areas where erosion is an issue.

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[2] "Types and Uses of Mulch in the Garden", Cornell Cooperative Extension, Cornell University, 1998

[3] Benjamin Vogt, A NEW GARDEN ETHIC: Cultivating Defiant Compassion for an Uncertain Future, September 11, 2017

- **Organic Wood Chips*** include hardwood and softwood chips and bark that decompose over time. They can improve soil fertility, aeration, structure, and drainage and have widespread use in the landscape. They are less likely to be dislocated by strong rains or heavy foot traffic than leaf mulch. They are a good choice for paths.

BENEFITS and APPLICATION

All mulches work to suppress weeds, conserve soil water, moderate soil temperatures, and add nutrients to the soil. They also minimize compaction.

The choice of mulch is generally dependent on where it is to be used and whether it is primarily around shrubs, on high visibility sites or on sloping areas. It can give the landscape a finished look and conserve water. Mulch can also protect trees and shrubs from lawnmowers and weed eaters by providing a clearly visible barrier. [4]

Leaf Mulch	Increases nutrients in soil, cost effective, suppresses weeds, is aesthetically pleasing, and easy to apply; provides a visible barrier around shrubs and trees to deter lawnmower and weed whacker damage. If it is applied too heavily, however, it can mat and prevent aeration and moisture. Organic leaf mulch used around trees and shrubs must not be placed directly on the trunks of trees and shrubs. Doing so can cause disease to enter the bark. It must be replenished regularly. ***Application****:* For trees use the 3-3-3 Rule: spread the mulch around the tree, keeping it about 3 inches deep and extending it out to a radius of about 3 feet from the trunk, leaving a cozy 3-inch gap around the trunk itself. Avoid tree "mulch volcanos."
"Green Mulch"	Uses plants to do the work of leaf and wood mulch; is naturally regenerating/self-renewing; is aesthetically pleasing; eases soil compaction, nourishes and cools the soil; reduces runoff, and prevents hostile weed takeover; may offer better carbon sequestration than wood chips; provides environmentally beneficial habitat for pollinators/wildlife; adds curb appeal. Offers an assortment of species to use from sun to shade, moist to dry soils. Using plants native to our area and weaving ground cover flowers among them offers additional cover and color. ***Application****:* for slopes and areas where grass is not suitable and other mulches have trouble staying in place. Examples include *Carex albicans*, *Carex rosea*, *Carex sprengelii, Bouteloua gracilis*, *Bouteloua curtipendula, Geranium maculatum, and Callirhoe involucrate.*
Wood Chips	Increase nutrients in soil, are cost effective and aesthetically pleasing. Easy to apply. Wood chips are derived from hard and soft woods; cedar mulch can repel some insect pests. Wood chips are most effective around established plants. They must be replenished, but less frequently than leaf mulch. ***Application****:* Use 4 to 6 inches (10-15 cm.) of wood chip mulch over a layer of leaf litter or compost. *

Choosing and using the appropriate mulch and applying it as described above will contribute significantly to the achievement of **FV's Strategic Plan Goal 8** objective, "to maintain FV grounds in an environmentally beneficial manner that is

[4] Ext.Vt.edu, "Springtime Mulching." March 15, 2014.

economically viable and maximizes the appearance and health of the soil, tree canopy, and native and designed landscapes."

* Please note that **Synthetic Mulches** (like crushed rock, pulverized rubber, and landscape fabrics) are also available. However, they are not recommended. They do not contribute to soil health. They may suffocate the soil, harm beneficial insects and microbes and alter the soil pH. Costs can be significant without regular replacement.

RESOURCES

Mulching for a Healthy Landscape. Publication 426-724. Virginia Cooperative Extension, Virginia Tech, and Virginia State University.
Mulch for the Home and Vegetable Garden, VCE Pub. 426-326 Sept. 2020.
Benjamin Vogt, A NEW GARDEN ETHIC: Cultivating Defiant Compassion for an Uncertain Future, September 11, 2017
"Types and Uses of Mulch in the Garden", Cornell Cooperative Extension, Cornell University, 1998

ALTERNATIVE GROUND COVERS – INFORMATION SHEET
Turf Care Alternatives Committee

WHY LOOK AT ALTERNATIVE GROUND COVERS?
Fairlington Villages (FV) encompasses approximately 93 acres of varied terrain, including areas of deep shade, above -ground tree roots, compacted hillsides, and places that regularly erode when it rains. In these areas, turfgrass generally has not been successful. Fortunately, many native alternatives to turf grass exist. Some of these alternatives are already in use in FV and can be expanded.

WHAT ARE EXAMPLES OF ALTERNATIVE GROUND COVERS?
According to PlantNoVaNatives.org, there are over 30 species of locally native plants that make excellent, aesthetically pleasing groundcovers, with options available for any growing condition.

- **Clover**, for example, produces nitrogen in the soil, minimizing the need for fertilizer and stays below the height of the grass. It intersperses with grass in equilibrium, without overtaking it and provides turf diversity that reduces susceptibility to disease that monocultures tend to create.
- **Golden ragwort** is highly effective at keeping down weeds, is evergreen, spreads on its own and tolerates a range of sun/shade and soil conditions. It also produces yellow flowers in the spring.
- **Green and gold** is low-growing, tolerates full sun to full shade and dry or moist conditions, spreads sideways, and has long-blooming flowers in mid- to late spring. Other alternative groundcovers include violets, moss, wood mulch, and chopped leaves.
- **"Green Mulch**" or "Living Mulch" is an alternative that does the work of wood mulch. It can simply be lots of plants, dense layers, and compatible plant communities woven together to cool the soil, reduce run-off and prevent weed takeovers. (See MULCH fact sheet for more information on "green mulch.")
- **Red fescue grass**, also known as "creeping red fescue" grows quickly and is a relatively low maintenance landscaping grass. It has a deep root system and is resistant to wear and drought. A mix of red fescue was suggested by Lancaster as an alternative for shady FV areas where turfgrass is difficult to grow.
- **"Eco-Lawn"** is a drought-resistant grass developed by Wildflower Farm that grows in full sun, part shade and even deep shade. A blend of five fine fescue grasses, it is highly drought tolerant, doesn't require the use of fertilizers or chemicals, and reduces the need for frequent mowing.

Creating more **rain gardens** could also be an effective solution in certain situations, as could creating **wildflower meadows**, where conditions are appropriate. Use **pollinator gardens** or other soil enhancing plants to improve soil health over time and to slow

stormwater runoff and eliminate chemicals from our communities into Lucky Run, Four Mile Run and Chesapeake Bay.

WHAT ARE POTENTIAL APPLICATIONS OF ALTERNATIVE GROUND COVERS?

- **Under trees** – Since turf and trees need different soil factors for health, increase mulch or chopped leaf rings under trees to be closer to the drip line. These practices will protect tree roots from foot traffic and, as they break down over time, will enhance soil health.
- **On hillsides** – Hillsides are impacted by erosion and compaction caused by drainage. Let clover and violets continue to grow naturally to improve soil health. Enhance this growth by planting/seeding clover, violets and other selected groundcovers. Green mulch may work well on some hillsides.
- **On property edges and in less visible areas** – In areas behind and, possibly, on the sides of homes, allow and encourage a more natural look using alternative ground covers and foregoing the use of weed control (like Fiesta).

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF ALTERNATIVE GROUND COVERS?

Increasing the use of native groundcovers will:

- provide a visually attractive alternative where turfgrass is hard to grow
- suppress weeds
- improve soil quality
- reduce run-off, thereby conserving water
- increase benefits to birds and insects
- require less maintenance than repeated efforts to reseed hard-to-grow areas
- reduce erosion and costs associated with remediation, over time
- stop the spread of non-native invasives

RESOURCES

- PlantNoVaNatives.org
- March 3, 2024, Walkthrough with Kirsten Conrad, Agriculture Natural Resources Extension Agent for Arlington County and the City of Alexandria
- March 14, 2024, Walkthrough with Mark Johnson and Mike Angels of Lancaster Landscapes

Fairlington Villages Strategic Plan, 2019
Goals, Objectives, Strategies Relevant to TAC Recommendations

Goal 8: Maintain the Integrity of the Community's Historic Architecture and Streetscapes
Objective #2: Maintain the appearance of the community's historic streetscapes
Strategy #10: Support Fairlington Villages' historic character through harmonious landscape design (see discussion of Goal 9: Maintain Sustainability, Safety, and Appearance of the Community's Grounds).

Goal 9: Enhance the Sustainability, Safety, and Appearance of the Community's Grounds

Objectives:

1. Follow cost-efficient and environmentally sensitive landscaping practices to conserve financial and natural resources, mediate diverse owner and tenant interests, and protect our local streams, flora, and fauna.
2. Alleviate drainage, erosion, and other landscaping problems to preserve the integrity, safety, and accessibility of common areas.
3. Support Fairlington Villages' historic character through harmonious landscape design, maintenance of our aging trees to protect nearby buildings, and succession planting to maintain abundant tree cover.
4. Raise owner and tenant awareness of sustainable landscaping practices and Board-approved policies on gardening in patios and common areas.

Strategies:

1. Become a model of sustainable landscaping practices by expanding native plantings around the property, using only pet- and human-friendly products, and reducing the need for costly and labor-intensive measures, such as fertilization, irrigation, and weed control.
a. Support similar practices of other local condominium associations, especially in South Fairlington.
b. Work closely with Arlington County and the City of Alexandria to maintain attractive, sustainable, and safe streetscapes.
2. Evaluate and propose cost-effective solutions for owners' and tenants' requests to amend problems with the community's turf, including muddy and eroded areas, barren or steep terrain, and other landscaping problems.

3. Continue partnering with Arlington County to expand storm water conservation efforts that protect Four Mile Run by developing and maintaining rain gardens in drainage areas.

4. Actively manage our aging tree canopy by completing identification of legacy trees on the property and consider commissioning an independent professional evaluation of those trees to guide decisions on timely pruning, removal, and replacement, including taking advantage of the Arlington County Tree Canopy Fund to obtain young trees as needed.

(continued)

5. Use newsletter articles, website and social media postings, plant sales, new owner and tenant packets, and guided walks around the property to educate residents about current landscape issues and the full scope of the 90-plus acres of our managed grounds. These communications can highlight Board-approved Garden policies, procedures for making service requests, and the benefits of using native plants, organic fertilizers, limited pesticides, and other sustainable landscaping practices.

6. Ensure that all landscaping associated with building maintenance and construction projects (e.g., trash container concealment, tree planting, roofing, telecommunications and electrical wiring, “dead” electrical transformers, etc.) conform to Board policies and restore affected areas to their original condition as much as possible.

CHARTER
Ad Hoc Committee on Turf Care Alternatives
Effective October 13, 2023

BACKGROUND

At the September meeting of the Fairlington Villages Board, the directors decided against the funding of the fall lawn chemical applications. In cooperation with the Grounds Committee a decision was made to form a new ad hoc committee to research alternative lawn care practices.

PURPOSE

The committee will research lawn care alternatives to chemical applications, including but not limited to:

- Improving soil quality (Examples: amending and/or de-compacting soil, improving drainage).
- Ground cover alternatives for areas not conducive to healthy grass (shade, steep hillsides, heavy foot traffic).
- Input from other communities dealing with challenges.
- Resources available from experts in residential lawn care (Arlington County naturalists, County Extension, Friends of Urban Agriculture, etc).
- Evaluating current turf treatment pilot areas in Fairlington Villages.
- Cost and practicality factors of using alternative fertilizer, weed and disease control practices.

LEADERSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP

The committee will be led by residents within Fairlington Villages in either a chairperson role or co-chair roles. A Board Member will be assigned by the Board President to serve as liaison.

TIMELINE

The goal of this committee is to complete the review and provide recommendations to the Board of Directors by June 2024.

MEETINGS

Meetings will be held at least monthly, with any future subcommittees also meeting monthly. Minutes of the meeting shall be kept as required by the Virginia Condominium Act. The schedule, notice and minutes of meetings shall be provided to management for purposes of the record and so that they may be announced. Meetings may be held virtually via Zoom or in-person as determined by committee leadership.

ADVISORY CAPACITY

The committee serves in an advisory capacity to the Board of Directors. Operations Manager Mark Johnson shall serve as management liaison. All requests for information and assistance shall be made by the committee chairs(s).

Joe Torres
President

cc: Board of Directors
General, Facilities, Operations, and Administrative Managers