



# TAKING CARE OF YOUR LAWN

## LAWN CARE IN SOUTH BETHANY HAS A MAJOR IMPACT ON THE WATER QUALITY IN OUR CANALS!

**Our Town's goal is to reduce the pollutants running into the canals**  
**We can only do that with your help.**

Homeowners who live on the water are usually not aware that their actions toward landscape management may actually be harming aquatic life. In our community, this damage can occur not only in our canals but downstream in our bays as well.

**Knowing that we all care about our canals and bays as a valuable shared asset that are important to our property values and esthetic enjoyment, we are distributing this fact sheet to the community so that we can work together to protect our canals and bays.**

### ***A 6 Step Plan for doing your part for 'fishable, swimmable' Bays***

- 1. Create a 6-foot wide 'no-mow' zone of low-maintenance plants between your lawn and the canal** to slow down and absorb pollutants before they run into the canal.
- 2. For low maintenance, and to attract native birds and butterflies, use native plants in your buffer.** They are adapted to our soils, rainfall, and climate so should not require water or fertilizer once they are established.
- 3. Because our canals are poorly flushed and already polluted, the use of chemical fertilizers is harmful to our canals. If you must use fertilizer, use organic compost and don't apply it within 10-feet of the canal except into the holes for new plantings in your buffer.** The use of compost as fertilizer can also improve soil health including water retention capacity. Why do we ask this? Fertilizer in the water makes algae grow; excessive algae creates lower oxygen levels in the water and can cause fish kills.
- 4. If you use a lawn service, it is your responsibility to make sure they know town rules that protect our canals;** 'no property owner shall permit or cause any cuttings or clippings from vegetation to be dropped, blown, or otherwise deposited into the canals.'
- 5. Sweep grass clippings, yard debris, and fertilizer residue, if used, off paved surfaces** like drive-ways, sidewalks and patios so they aren't washed into storm drains and carried into the canals during the next rain storm.
- 6. 'Recycle' the grass clippings that are on your lawn by not collecting them.** Grass clippings contain nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, and smaller amounts of other essential plant nutrients; Basically, a free 4-1-3 fertilizer. When left on the lawn, these nutrients are eventually returned to the soil.

**Thanks for your help in making our water cleaner for all of us.**