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Larchmont-Mamaroneck Healthy Yards Project Encourages Residents to Make Lawns and Gardens Safer by Avoiding Pesticides and Herbicides

New resource -- www.LMHealthyyards.org -- offers guidelines

April 25, 2019 – As milder spring weather draws residents outdoors, the Larchmont-Mamaroneck Healthy Yards Project announces the launch of a new initiative to help residents enjoy safe, appealing and sustainable lawns and gardens without the use of pesticides or herbicides. Volunteers from the Town of Mamaroneck, Village of Larchmont and Village of Mamaroneck are collaborating in this effort, sharing recommendations and examples through a new webpage, www.LMHealthyyards.org.

Scientific studies — including those cited by the American Association of Pediatrics, the World Health Organization and the Audubon Society — have demonstrated a link between pesticides and both human and canine cancers, hormonal imbalances, neurological impairments, congenital disabilities, respiratory effects and developmental disorders. Children, pets and pregnant women are particularly vulnerable. According to the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, “Safe and effective alternatives exist for most chemical pesticides and fertilizers. There is no need to expose our families, communities and local wildlife to chemicals that are known for potential hazards. Switching to a chemical free yard has many advantages.”

Pesticides and herbicides can remain active in the environment for long periods of time. They have adverse effects on non-target organisms that enrich soil and provide food for birds and beneficial insects. They seep into our groundwater, impacting streams and lakes locally and also miles away. These chemicals are easily tracked into homes, causing ongoing exposure to residents.

High-nitrogen, fast-acting fertilizers are a concern as well. Run-off from fertilizers reaches waterways, including the Long Island Sound, creating an excess of nitrogen and phosphorous. This increases algae growth that can reduce oxygen in the water, leading to illness or death of fish and other marine life. The US Environmental Protection Agency considers nutrient pollution of this type to be one of our country’s most challenging environmental problems. Mamaroneck Town Supervisor Nancy Seligson said “Every resident can help improve water quality by eliminating the use of pesticides and reducing the use of nitrogen fertilizers on their lawns.”

The good news is whether you work with a landscape professional, tend to your own yard, or maintain a container garden, you can take steps to achieve a healthier result. Visit www.LMHealthyyards.org to learn about:

- lawn care approaches that promote growth of healthy turf without pesticides and herbicides;
- advantages of incorporating beautiful, low-maintenance native plants into your garden that provide sustenance for birds, pollinators and wildlife;
- methods for promoting a healthy ecosystem in your yard to reduce damaging plants and insects;
- community events and resources, such as the Healthy Yard books currently on display at the Larchmont and Mamaroneck libraries and the 4/27/19 Earth Day presentation at the Larchmont Library (on building butterfly habitat in your yard), by guest speaker Sandy Morrissey of the Bronx River South Shore Audubon society.

To take the Healthy Yard Pledge and receive a free sign to display in your yard, visit www.LMHealthyyards.org. To join the team of Larchmont-Mamaroneck Healthy Yards Project volunteers, or for more information, email the Town of Mamaroneck Sustainability Coordinator at SOdierna@townofmamaroneckny.org.

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