

# January, 2007

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## Season in Review/2007 Forecast

On January 11<sup>th</sup> we attended the Indiana Green Expo. To a room full of lawn care professionals Dr. Zac Reicher, Purdue University College of Agronomy, opened his Year in Review discussion with a lighthearted question, "Did anyone see any crabgrass this year?" Responses ranged from groans, to sighs, to outright laughter. He went on to detail how a 3 year trend of successive heat and drought have caused even the best maintained lawns to loose grass and allow weeds to invade. Temperature dictates whether grass will photosynthesize (builds roots and look green) or respire (lose roots and look brown). In high heat certain weeds, like crabgrass, thrive. Northern turf grasses, like Kentucky bluegrass and perennial rye, go dormant and live on stored energy. They ultimately die if conditions don't improve. Dr. Reicher emphasized the best way to keep lawns looking good in adverse conditions is to practice proper mowing and watering techniques. If a lawn does get thin, over seeding in fall is recommended to keep the grass thick. For a comprehensive primer on how grass grows, please visit our website at [www.childsplayorganiclawns.com/cpu](http://www.childsplayorganiclawns.com/cpu) and select Turf Management Techniques.



We were advised conditions are right for a lot of winter annual weeds, like Henbit and Common Chickweed. Many of you may remember seeing them in the spring of 2006. It's likely these weeds will be prevalent in 2007 again, as they are germinating now!

The good news is many of our customers' lawns fared much better than their chemical counterparts. Our Lawn Reviews indicated changes to the programs, along with homeowners adopting proper mowing and watering techniques, reduced disease, increased weed resistance, and allowed grass to bounce back much more quickly from the summer heat. How green was your grass this December? I know mine was just as thick and lush as it was in September! When properly maintained, turf grasses are very resilient, versatile plants.

## Announcements!



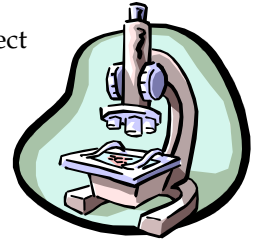
Child's Play Organic Lawns<sup>SM</sup> is proud to announce we are opening an Indianapolis office! Brian will be spending a LOT of his time next year in the Circle City. Taking his place in South Bend will be Tara Ciszczon. Tara finished her second season with the company this year and is eager to step into a leadership role. Please welcome her as the new General Manager in South Bend.

Not only are we opening a second office, we grew substantially in 2006, thanks to environmentally and health conscious customers such as yourselves. With the expansion and growth, we need help! **As of this writing we need an 2 Applicators, and part-time sales help.** If you, or anyone you know, are interested, please go to [www.childsplayorganiclawns.com/hw](http://www.childsplayorganiclawns.com/hw) for full descriptions and job applications.

As a reminder, *lawn care contracts are automatically renewed for the following season unless you notify us you do not wish to have further treatments.* We expect we'll begin applying Turf Shield 9-1-3<sup>TM</sup> around March 15<sup>th</sup>. Notification calls will be made the week prior. If you would like to change your program, or if you do not want your contract renewed, please contact us either at 574.289.0680 or via the website at [www.childsplayorganiclawns.com](http://www.childsplayorganiclawns.com).

## New for 2007

**Adult Insect Control** - After several years of research we are happy to announce a new Adult Insect Control Program. Creepy-crawlies like millipedes, centipedes, bag worms, spiders, billbugs, ants and the like are targeted with a combination of biological controls. During a workshop at the Green Expo, Drs. Tim Gibb and Doug Richmond from Purdue University discussed destructive insects in turf. It was reinforced to us that biological controls, such as parasitic nematodes, are rivaling some chemicals for control of certain pests. Like all our products, the insect controls are completely safe for you, your kids, pets and the environment.



**Soil Remediation** - Last September we attended a workshop given by Alan Siewert, Urban Forester from Ohio State University. He gave a very informative presentation on what happens to soil during and after the construction process. Suffice to say, it's nowhere near a good growing environment! New homeowners should strongly consider soil remediation. Further, if you have extremely hard clay and your grass simply doesn't do well, soil remediation could be the answer. We are happy to consult and quote on this very specialized service.

## Pesticide News You Should Know



Many times customers ask us about the potential for pesticides to come into their lawns from neighbors, even if the customer is using organic treatments. The answer is, "it's possible and depends on the weather." There are strict guidelines pesticide applicators are required to follow to avoid drift, runoff, and off-target applications. Liquid pesticides should not be sprayed when the temperature is above 85 degrees because the chemicals can vaporize. Pesticides should not be sprayed when the wind is above 5 mph to prevent them from blowing where they are not intended. When applying granular pesticides, applicators should use landscape guards and are required to sweep or use blowers to clean up sidewalks, driveways,

etc.

If you witness a pesticide applicator violating these guidelines, want to report an off-target application, or have concerns regarding pesticide use on or near your property, you can contact the following agencies to file complaints and receive regulatory information:

In Indiana: Indiana State Chemist Office [www.isco.purdue.edu](http://www.isco.purdue.edu)

In Michigan: Department of Agriculture [www.michigan.gov/mda](http://www.michigan.gov/mda)

Most people are unaware the modern pesticide industry began after World War II. Companies that produced chemical and biological weapons for the military needed a new market for their products. The chemical industry saw moneymaking possibilities in the lawns of the growing postwar suburban communities. Many of today's pesticides include components of wartime defoliants like Agent Orange, nerve-gas type insecticides, and artificial hormones.

Immediate (acute) symptoms of exposure to pesticides include irritation of the eyes, nose, and throat; burning, stinging, itches, rashes, and blistering of the skin; nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea; coughing, wheezing, headache, and general malaise.

Long term (chronic) affects include cancer, behavioral impairment, reproductive dysfunction, endocrine disruption, developmental disabilities, learning disabilities, skin conditions, and respiratory diseases such as asthma.

Many times exposure to pesticides goes unnoticed and is chalked up to allergies or seasonal illness. **Remember**, often it is not the first exposure that is problematic. Pesticides accumulate in our bodies and cause unpredictable side effects.

*January 15, 2007, Real Alternatives to Toxins in the Environment*

"Chemicals have replaced bacteria and viruses as the main threat to health. The diseases we're beginning to see as the major causes of death in the latter part of this century and into the 21<sup>st</sup> century are diseases of chemical origin." Dick Irwin, toxicologist at Texas A&M Universities

*December 13, 2006, American Journal of Epidemiology Online:*

Self-reported residential pesticide use is associated with a 39% increase in breast cancer risk. Increased risk was seen for lawn and garden pesticide use ... this finding comes from a study on Long Island, NY, of 1,508 newly diagnosed women matched with controls.

*November 20, 2006, Pediatrics:*

Prenatal exposure to the pesticide chlorpyrifos is associated with developmental delays in children and attention deficit hyperactivity problems. The proportion of New York City 3-yr olds showing delayed development was five times greater in the higher exposure group.

## Turf Tips

**Mowing When it's Wet:** Ideally, grass should be mowed when it is dry, but not when it is stressed and brown. However, waiting until the rain stops, then cutting off over 1/2 of the blade is worse. Leaving giant clumps in the lawn doesn't help things, either. The pros tell us it's better to mow, even in the rain, than let the grass get very tall and hack it down.

**Billbugs:** There's a new pest in town. Billbugs are the most misdiagnosed problem in lawn care because it looks so much like common diseases. If there are small dead patches in your lawn, grab the dead grass and pull it up. If it's billbug damage, the grass will easily pull out of the ground. Look in the end of the stem. If it is packed with fine sawdust like material, it is billbugs. We can effectively treat the adult bug with our Adult Insect Control.

**I Think I'll go Eat Worms:** Look for flocks of birds feeding in your lawn. Inspect the area where they were. If you find holes burrowed into the ground from foraging, it's likely they were feeding on sod webworms, cutworms, armyworms, grubs or other larvae. If there is dead, brown grass in the area, its possible whatever they were eating is killing grass. We can help you identify the problem and recommend a treatment.



Products	Description	Sale Price
<b>Turf Shield 9-1-3™</b>	<b>Turf Shield 9-1-3™</b> contains the ingredient 'corn gluten meal' which is edible and an EPA exempt organic weed control. The combined action of the fertilizer and the weed control will stop new weeds from germinating and reproducing up to a 60% success rate for the first use and a 95% success rate if used over a three-year time period (study by Iowa State University). <b>Turf Shield 9-1-3™</b> produces a long lasting beautiful color, and controls weeds without the harmful side effects of dangerous pesticides. This product works best if applied in March or April, prior to the weed germination and then again in late August/early September to suppress fall germinating weeds. <b>Wholesale prices available in quantities over 1 ton.</b>	<u>50 lb bags</u> 1 - \$33.95 2 - 4 \$31.95 ea. 5 + \$30.95 ea.  <u>Coverage:</u> 2,500 – 5,000 sq. ft.
<b>Vibrant Plus 10-2-5™</b>	Newly formulated granular fertilizer <u>plus iron</u> , manufactured exclusively for Child's Play, containing all food-grade ingredients. <b>Vibrant Plus 10-2-5™</b> provides a complete and balanced meal for your lawn, producing a long lasting lush, deep green turf your neighbors will admire! <b>Wholesale prices available in quantities over 1 ton.</b>	<u>50 lb bags</u> 1 - \$33.95 2 - 4 \$31.95 ea. 5 + \$30.95 ea.  <u>Coverage:</u> 5,000 sq.ft.
<b>Liquid Gold</b>	This product is the core of our liquid spray program. <b>Liquid Gold</b> is comprised of a blend of wonderful natural products, including Beet Molasses, Humate, Kelp, Yucca, and other food grade ingredients. A regular program using <b>Liquid Gold</b> provides a fast and long lasting deep green color, and a complete, balanced diet for turf to stay healthy, thick and disease resistant.	Used Only in our Lawn Treatment Programs
<b>Permaguard® Natural Insecticide</b>	<b>Permaguard®</b> , a natural insecticide dust, is derived from Diatomaceous Earth and Pyrethrins (natural extract of Chrysanthemums), and is very effective against ants, crickets, aphids, spiders, fleas and a variety of other common insects. Use <b>Permaguard®</b> inside your home around baseboards, under appliances, around the outside of your home, on your flowers and vegetables, on your lawn, and even on your pets to control fleas! Puffer tubes also available for higher use applications.	\$12.95 for 5 oz. Puffer bottle \$12.95 for 1 lb. Refill bag (+s/h)
<b>Permaguard® Fossil Shell Flour</b>	<b>Pure food-grade Diatomaceous Earth.</b> Dr. Phillip Schaible, at Michigan State University, regarding adding Diatomaceous Earth to livestock feed: "Contains 15 trace minerals important to animal diets, DE mixes well with all feeds while guarding against insect damage. Prevents worms and keeps virus epidemics from developing. Saves albumen, destroys harmful acids, safeguards the stomach. Improves health and growth of young animals. Causes better digestion, allowing animals to absorb a higher percentage of protein from its regular diet." <b>Call for livestock feed rates, and discount prices on higher quantities.</b>	1 lb bag - \$7.00 5 lb bag - \$15.00 10 lb bag - \$20.00 50 lb bag - \$30.00 (+ s/h)
<b>Premium Grass Seed</b>	We have had fantastic results in our over seeding service with this line of premium grass seeds, and we are now making this available for sale directly to customers. A variety of blends are available for both sunny and shady lawns. Just give us a call!	\$2.75/lb for most varieties (+s/h)
<b>Granular Gypsum and Lime</b>	Gypsum is a naturally occurring mineral that has been used for years for binding sandy soils, loosening clay soils, removing sodium, and providing calcium to lawns. Lime is very effective in reducing the acidity levels of soils, and for providing calcium to lawns. We can have an analysis performed on a soil sample from your lawn, which will tell us exactly how much, if any, gypsum and/or lime you need to maintain your turf in top notch condition.	\$8.00 - 40 lb bag (+s/h)

Program	All programs include discounts for seasonal prepayment and a mid-season lawn review. 6 step programs receive a 10% discount on individual services!	Cost for a 5,000 sq. ft. lawn
<b>Worry Free</b>	A top quality lawn treatment and management program for those desiring a perfect lawn. This comprehensive program incorporates 2 treatments of our Turf Shield 9-1-3™, 3 treatments of Liquid Gold, 1 treatment of granular Vibrant Plus 10-2-5™, 4 hours of weeding, and a core aeration.	7 payments of \$81.00 each (+tax)
<b>Premium Combo</b>	To see your lawn healthier and more beautiful than ever consider this program. It uses 2 treatments of our Turf Shield 9-1-3™, 3 treatments of Liquid Gold, and 1 treatment of granular Vibrant Plus 10-2-5™.	6 payments of \$62.00 each (+tax)
<b>Silver Combo Plus</b>	Our standard program, this is a balanced feeding designed to provide substantial weed control and a long lasting deep green. The program consists of 3 granular treatments and 2 treatments of Liquid Gold.	5 payments of \$62.00 each (+tax)
<b>Silver Combo</b>	A lighter version of the Silver Combo Plus, this 4 step program is a cost effective, basic fertilization program consisting of 2 spring and 2 fall fertilizations.	4 payments of \$62.00 each (+tax)
<b>Premium Granular</b>	The best of all worlds at an affordable price! Weed prevention, long lasting benefits of slow release granular products, and iron supplement! Program consists of 2 granular treatments of Turf Shield 9-1-3™ and 2 treatments of granular Vibrant Plus 10-2-5™. Ideal if you prefer not to use Liquid Gold.	4 payments of \$75.00 each (+tax)
<b>Do It Yourself!</b>	For those who like to work in the yard and prefer to do their own applications we provide a comprehensive 4 step do-it-yourself program. We will deliver, to your door, Turf Shield 9-1-3™, Vibrant Plus 10-2-5™, and application instructions for a whole season!	\$150.00 season, \$7.00 per delivery (+tax)
<b>Over seeding</b>	Let Child's Play thicken up your lawn by over seeding, timed perfectly with your treatment program, using high quality, disease resistant premium grass seed, specifically selected for your growing conditions. Remember to notify us if you over seed. Using the Turf Shield 9-1-3™ on a newly seeded lawn will prevent satisfactory germination of the seed.	\$80.00 (+tax)
<b>Aeration</b>	Aerating your lawn will loosen compacted soil and allow air, nutrients, and water down to the roots. Ideal for preparing your lawn for over-seeding, and for maintaining turf health.	\$55.00
<b>Power Rake</b>	Power raking your lawn will mechanically remove thatch that has built up in your lawn, which promotes disease and weak grass roots. Best if performed in the early spring.	\$73.00
<b>Lime or Gypsum Treatment</b>	A neutral pH is important for turf grass' ability to extract and utilize important minerals and nutrients from the soil. Symptoms of low pH are a sickly yellow or washed out green color, moss growth or very thin grass stand under trees.	\$69.00 per application (+tax)
<b>Natural Fungus Management</b>	These programs consist of a consultation, and usually three treatments spaced 7 – 10 days apart. Treat in mid to late spring to prevent summer and fall damage. Can also treat once symptoms occur to prevent spread of fungus. Effective against Dollar Spot, Rust, Red Thread diseases & others.	\$56.00 per application (+tax)
<b>Grub Treatment</b>	Grubs and many other larvae don't stand a chance against Child's Play Organic Lawns natural treatment using parasitic nematodes. Nematodes are a living microorganism, like little heat-seeking missiles, that kill grubs all season long. Best to treat May through September when the soil temperatures are above 60°F.	\$87.00 per application (+tax)
<b>Mole Repellent</b>	Chase Granular Mole and Gopher Repellent effectively rids lawns, gardens and planting areas of all sorts of burrowing animals. It is strongly recommended it be applied spring, summer and fall for best results.	\$69.00 per application (+tax)
<b>Soil Analysis</b>	Child's Play has partnered with a certified soil testing lab to provide a comprehensive analysis of your lawn's soil. The analysis provides information about the levels of vital nutrients and trace minerals. The results also tell us exactly what needs to be done, if anything, to balance the soil to provide the ideal growing environment.	\$39.95, rebated if recommended amendments are applied by us. (+tax)
<b>The Weed Hound®</b>	Those pesky dandelions don't stand a chance against The Weed Hound! Pulls weeds out quickly, root and all, with very little effort. A unique plunger clears weeds after pulling, and its durable steel construction and tempered steel tines ensure years of satisfaction.	\$21.95 (+s/h)

Is it better to mulch or bag? Mulch. Leaving the trimmings behind returns nitrogen and moisture to the soil. It's like recycling your fertilizer! If you are removing no more than 1/3 of the blade, and cutting to 3", the trimmings do not contribute to thatch buildup. They are over 90% water. If you have a fungal infection, bag and rinse your equipment so as not to spread the infection.