



# GUIDE TO A **SAFE PAWS** LAWN

---



# INTRODUCTION



Our newest family member, Jax!

Fellow Pet Owners,

We finally got a puppy when our children were old enough to “take care of it.” You know how that story goes. Now I’m the official dog walker. But I couldn’t be more in love with our newest family member, Jax.

On one of our first walks, with my doggie bag in hand, Jax wanted to do his business in a neighbor’s yard. I halted, pulled him back and stared at the sign in the front yard. It said in bold red letters, “Caution! Pesticide Application. Keep Off!”

I looked around the neighborhood and for the first time, noticed lots of similar signs. A light bulb went off for me.

We need to start an educational campaign to show people how to get back to a naturally lush, beautiful lawn that is free of chemical fertilizers and pesticides. Naturally green grass where our pets and children can safely run and play without fear of ingesting or tracking potentially harmful lawn chemicals into our homes.

So I turned to our family business for help. In 2015, we created the Safe Paws campaign. It was a natural fit as The Espoma Company has been a pioneer in educating people about natural gardening solutions since 1929. In this guide you’ll learn simple ways to keep your four-legged friends healthy and safe outside so they can live a longer life inside.

We firmly believe in putting family first. And for us, that means pets, too.

Jeremy Brunner

Vice President, The Espoma Company, 4th Generation

*Jeremy Brunner*

# SAFE PAWS GUIDE



Why a **Safe Paws** lawn matters.....5-6

Do you know what's being put on your lawn?.....7-8

Four myths keeping you from a **Safe Paws** lawn.....9-10

Checklist to keep your pets happy and healthy.....11-12

About The Espoma Company.....13-14



# WHY A SAFE PAWS LAWN & GARDEN MATTERS

## What we know about pets and lawns:

- ✓ *The EPA estimates that Americans apply 90 million pounds of pesticides every year.*
- ✓ *Every year the ASPCA receives tens of thousands of calls involving animal companions who've had potentially harmful contact with insecticides, weed killers and other garden hazards.*
- ✓ *According to the National Canine Cancer Foundation, cancer affects 1 out of every 3 dogs.*
- ✓ *Cancer has no known single cause. However, the ASPCA says that both hereditary and environmental factors can contribute to cancer in pets.*
- ✓ *A 2004 study of Scottish terriers found that dogs exposed to lawn and garden chemicals may have a higher risk of bladder cancer.*



*As with almost anything, information is power.*

The more pet parents know about potentially harmful products, the better they will be at keeping them happy and healthy. **After all, who could argue that less chemicals on our lawn isn't better for people, pets and the planet.**

We believe, like eating nutritious food, the safest practice is to use organic lawn and garden products and to limit the use of potentially harmful garden chemicals.



# DO YOU KNOW WHAT'S BEING PUT ON YOUR LAWN?

Get your lawn off  
of Fast Food!

Most conventional lawn care programs spread pesticides on the entire lawn, whether there is a problem or not. These pesticides are potentially harmful to children, pets and the environment. Conventional lawn programs also use synthetic fertilizers that are loaded with fast acting chemicals, and made with fossil fuels such as natural gas and coal. These chemicals can cause grass to burn, and can kill earthworms and beneficial microbes in the soil. All excess chemical fertilizers not taken up into the grass can leach away into nearby waterways, causing harmful algae blooms.



Get your lawn on  
Healthy Food!

Organic lawn care focuses on providing a healthy lawn and soil. In healthy lawns, grass roots grow deep into the soil, making them more resistant to drought and other stress such as weeds, insects and diseases. To achieve this, you or the service that you use need to feed your lawn with natural organic fertilizers like the ones from Espoma. They provide long lasting nutrition that won't burn your lawn or leach out into nearby waterways. You won't have to mow your lawn as often and your children and pets can play on it without any worries. Four simple applications are all you need to have a strong, lush green lawn.



# 4 MYTHS PREVENTING YOU FROM A SAFE PAWS LAWN



MYTH 1

## My grass won't look good.

While synthetic fertilizers offer a potent, fast dose of greening, much of their nutrition leaches away. Organics are slower to release but last much longer. And if you use a mulching mower to return clippings to the lawn, you reduce the lawn's nutritional need by up to 30%. That means you don't need as much fertilizer and can still have a lush, green lawn.



MYTH 2

## I will have insect problems.

For insect control, attract birds! They are nature's best biological insect controllers. Plant trees that birds love and use as sources for food, such as bittersweet, crabapple, flowering dogwood or holly. Use plants as pest repellents such as marigolds, nasturtiums and geraniums.



MYTH 3

## I won't be able to control weeds.

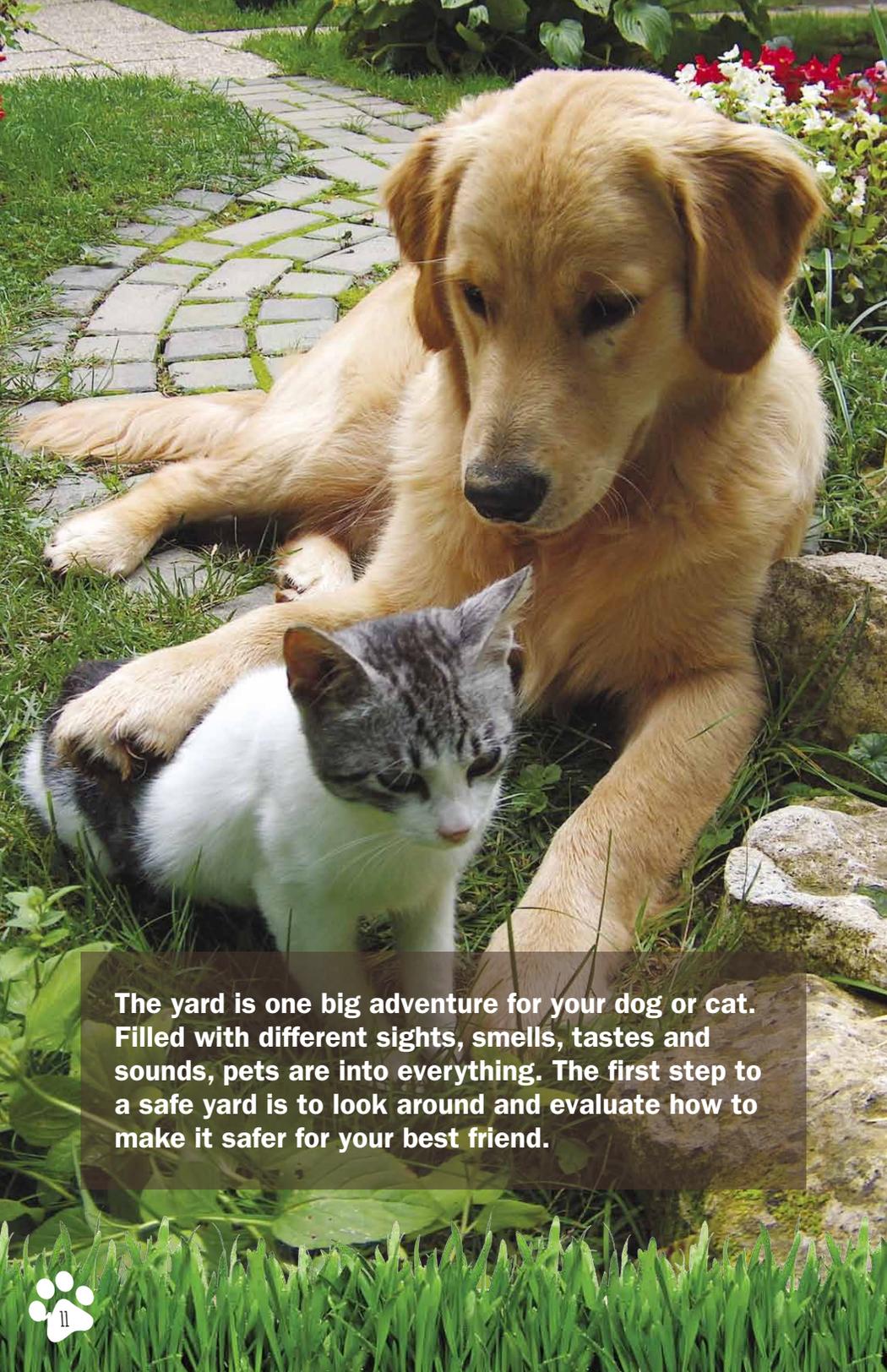
Did you know that a lawn with about 15% weeds can look practically weed-free to the average observer? If weeds are a big problem for your lawn, you may want to apply Espoma Weed Preventer in the Spring. A healthy lawn will grow thick, deep roots that will help keep even the toughest weeds from sprouting.

MYTH 4

## Organics cost a lot more.

The initial costs of using organics may be slightly more, but according to a study by Environmental GrassRoots Education, once established, an organic lawn program can result in savings of more than 25% over a conventional program. That's because an organic program builds up the soil biology, which will, over time, sustain the grass with minimal inputs. So it's less expensive to use organics in the long run.





# CHECKLIST

## TO KEEP PETS HAPPY & HEALTHY

-  **Store hazardous products in a secure place**  
Dogs and cats are curious. Keep dangerous chemicals such as insecticides, paint, car parts and gasoline out of reach.
-  **Keep grasses mowed**  
Since fleas and ticks lurk in tall grasses, keep your lawns mowed at 3 – 3.5 inches. Don't go much shorter than that otherwise the grass won't help suppress weeds.
-  **Safe Paws in Winter**  
Wash your pet's paws with water after a winter walk. Salt from ice melt can make your pet sick if ingested.
-  **Identification**  
Make sure pets have a collar with identification tags on, even for short walks.
-  **Compost**  
Food and garden waste make excellent additions to garden soil. Just keep pets out of the compost pile as some garden waste may get your pet sick if eaten while decomposing.
-  **Standing water**  
Standing water can be a breeding ground for parasites, bacteria, worms and mosquitoes. Replace hazardous standing water with a rain garden, or install a proper drainage system.
-  **Move it**  
Give healthy adult dogs at least 20 minutes of exercise twice a day. You can even train some cats to walk on a leash. Find a good harness and don't give up after a few attempts.

The yard is one big adventure for your dog or cat. Filled with different sights, smells, tastes and sounds, pets are into everything. The first step to a safe yard is to look around and evaluate how to make it safer for your best friend.

# WHO IS ESPOMA?



SINCE 1929  
**Espoma**  
**ORGANIC**

Did you know?

Since 1929 The Espoma Company has been the leader in natural gardening solutions. While much has changed throughout the years, our core philosophy has guided four generations - make the highest quality, most effective natural and organic gardening products possible.

From our line of organic plant foods, like Holly-tone®, to our Premium Organic Lawn Food, we make sure all our products work in harmony with nature to grow beautiful healthy lawns and gardens.

For more information on how to have a Safe Paws Lawn visit [www.espoma.com](http://www.espoma.com) or ask your local garden center how to switch to the Espoma Organic Annual Feeding Program.

- The Espoma Company is a fourth generation, family owned business located in Millville, NJ.
- Now over 85 years young, Espoma is the original and largest manufacturer of organic fertilizers for the retail lawn and garden industry.
- Since 1929, not one employee has lost their job due to automation in the manufacturing plant.
- Our employees are like family, with multi-generations working side by side, and an average tenure of 14 years with the company.
- Espoma uses 100% solar powered electricity to run its manufacturing and office operations.
- Almost 3 million kilowatt hours of electricity have been generated since its installation. Visit [www.espoma.com](http://www.espoma.com) for up to the minute monitoring of our solar power.
- We are committed to our mission “People, Pets, Planet!” We put family first. And for us, that means pets, too.





# GUIDE TO A SAFE PAWS LAWN

