



Ridgewood Environmental Advisory Committee 2009 Consumer Guide for Selecting a Landscape Contractor

Landscaping affects the beauty of your property as well as the environment, and even your family's health. When deciding on a contractor, it's important to be well informed. As an educated consumer, you can choose a landscaper that will better meet your needs in the most cost effective, efficient and responsible way.

Questions to Consider:

- If you currently use a landscaper, how satisfied are you with their services?
- What might you improve?
- What are you looking to achieve by using a landscaper? - General Lawn Care/ - Shrub and Tree Maintenance/ - Landscape Design and Installation/ or - Other

By ordinance in Ridgewood, all landscape contractors are required to be registered in town.

- Is your landscaper registered?
- Is your landscaper properly insured?

State law requires landscape contractors to be licensed for commercial pesticide application.

- Is your landscaper properly licensed and trained?
- Are you knowledgeable about the products and treatments that your landscaper uses on your lawn and shrubs?
- Do you know the recommended treatment schedule for the products being used?
 - How many times per year is your lawn treated?
 - How many times per year are your shrubs treated?
- How soon after application should you wait before allowing pets and children to come into contact with the treated area?

As a property owner, it's important to know about the products being used on your property. There are a variety of products on the market and it pays to know your options. The following is an excerpt from a NJ State article:

DEP Calls for Residents to Limit Pesticide Use to Minimize Health Risks and Environmental Impacts: Commercial Applicators to Notify Public before Large-Scale Spraying

(03/66) TRENTON - In anticipation of increased landscape and gardening activities this spring and summer, Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Commissioner Bradley M. Campbell today urged New Jersey's residents to use pesticides sparingly and reminded commercial applicators of their obligation to provide the public advance notice before large-scale pesticide applications.

"Homeowners and licensed applicators need to protect themselves and the environment from pesticide misuse and overexposure," said Commissioner Campbell. "I encourage all residents to explore alternative pest control measures that are not only safe, but also help New Jersey minimize the contribution of pesticides to water pollution."

Although pesticides can be beneficial, they can also pose risks to human health and the environment if improperly handled. The risk to human health can result from several sources: direct exposure through improper use, residual pesticides on food, and release into the environment from improper storage or disposal. Children and infants are particularly susceptible to pesticide exposure.

More information about pesticide treatments is available at the following websites:

www.state.nj.us/dep/enforcement/pcp
www.pestmanagement.rutgers.edu/PAT/index.htm
www.cce.cornell.edu

*The following websites offer eco-friendly lawn and garden products:

<http://www.blueseal.com/lawncare/safensimple.php>
<http://www.scotts.com>
www.natureslawn.com
www.planetnatural.com
www.thegreenguide.com

Before hiring a landscaper, consider the following:

- 1) Request references from existing customers or contact Village Hall to verify that that your contractor is properly registered, licensed and trained.
- 2) Agree on the pricing and scope of work to be completed in a written contract, including the type of pesticides used and frequency of their application.
- 3) Be willing to explore whether the benefits outweigh the risks.

**To get a list of registered landscapers in Ridgewood go to: www.ridgewoodnj.net/regland

For information on the license and training status of pesticide applicators and operators go to:
http://datamine2.state.nj.us/DEP_OPRA/OpraMain/categories?category=Pesticides

* Note - We do not endorse these sites.

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