Glossary

Aeration – The process of removing plugs of soil with a mechanical tool to relieve compaction in the soil, to improve the flow of oxygen and water and facilitate root development.

Annuals – Plants that live for only one growing season.

Beneficial Insects – Insects and bugs that contribute to ecosystem health and feed on problem insects.

Biodiversity – The variability among living organisms including diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.

Biopesticides – certain types of pesticides derived from such natural materials as animals, plants, bacteria and certain minerals.

Cultivar – A commercially cultivated variety of a plant species.

Deadhead – To remove old flowers from a plant.

Decomposition – The breakdown of organic materials by biological activity to a stable form of compost.

Defoliation - The loss of leaves or foliage on a plant or tree.

Dethatching – Removing dead and decaying organic matter that has formed a dense layer of material on the surface of the soil.

Ecosystem – a community of organisms interacting with one another and with the chemical and physical factors making up their environment.

Endophyte – a fungus naturally found in many fescues and ryegrasses that contributes to the grass' resistance to some insects.

Groundcover – Low growing plants that cover the soil and help prevent erosion. Often discussed as an alternative to grass.

Grub – The larval stage in a beetle's life. Grubs live in the soil and eat the roots of grass and may cause grass to die.

Humus – Organic matter that has been decomposed to the point where the original organic matter is no longer recognizable. Humus provides many benefits to the soil and plant life.

Infestation – the presence of pests in numbers or under conditions which involve an immediate or potential risk of substantial loss or damage

Mulch – A soil covering that prevents the growth of weeds, retains moisture and provides protection from extreme temperature changes. Grass clippings, leaves, bark chips, straw and river rock can all be used for mulch.

Native species – Plants that are indigenous to a particular geographical region and occupy a niche in the local ecosystem. Their adaptation to the local climate, soil and insect and plant populations increases their ability to thrive.

Nematodes – Microscopic worms that are harmless to the soil and people but are effective as a biological control for a range of soil-dwelling insect pests such as lawn grubs.

NPK – The three main nutrients found in a fertilizer: nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium.

Overseeding – Applying a suitable blend of grass seeds to an existing lawn to replenish grass cover to create thick grass that will crowd out weeds.

Perennial – A plant different from an annual plant (that lives only one year) or a biannual plant (that lives two years) that lives for many years.

Phytotoxic – Toxic to plant life and causes plant injury.

Summer dormancy – The natural process by which grass temporarily stops growing and turns brown as temperatures rise during the summer.

Topdressing – Adding organic material such as compost to the surface of the soil to improve soil structure and nutrients.

Solarization – A process designed to kill weeds by using the sun to heat soil to extreme temperatures, usually under plastic sheeting.

Xeriscaping - Landscaping design with water conservation in mind that uses drought-resistant or drought-tolerant plants.