LAKES AND LAWNS

Did you know that lawns are the main source of ecological degradation of lakes? Wherever there is a lawn, there is deforestation. Wherever there is deforestation, there is degradation! The immune system of a lake is the forest that surrounds it. Of course, a healthy lake can make some allowances to satisfy some of our needs. Nevertheless, it cannot tolerate lawns along its shoreline or within its forestial border. Lakes abhor all excesses created by humans.

The Evils of Lawns

Some cottagers adore their lawns. On the other hand, lakes cannot tolerate lawns: they make them sick. Whenever lawns are found along the shores of lakes, the results are felt in various ways, such as warming of the water, over fertilization, increased water flow, erosion and biological desolation.

Fertilizers

Healthy green lawns have usually been sprayed with fertilizer. Unfortunately, a vast amount of this fertilizer gets washed into the lake by rainwater, thus contributing to the over fertilization of the lake water. As a result, the aquatic plants begin to multiply at an excessively high rate.

Warming of the Water

Overfertilization is not the only problem that a lake has to face. When forests are replaced by lawns, the lakes have too much and too direct exposure to the sun, resulting in the warming of the water temperature. The warm water also contributes to excessive growth of aquatic plants, even algae blooms. Moreover, trout suffer due to this warming trend. Trout like cool water and are constantly searching for shaded areas near the natural shoreline. Trout don't like lawns.

Increased Water Flow

The humus found in the forest easily retains the rainwater, even on very steep slopes. This helps control the water flow into the lake and prevents excessive water intake. Lawns, however, retain very little rainwater and, consequently, the level of lakes rises after a rainfall. The difference between low and high levels becomes greater making for scary rises, followed by low dry periods.

Erosion

During a rainstorm, millions and millions of raindrops come down in the forest and are slowed down in their path by the presence of leaves and shrubs. When the drops finally reach the ground, they no longer have the strength to cause erosion. However, when a forest is replaced by a lawn, it is a totally different story. The raindrops hit the soil with full force, at a very high speed, thus creating erosion. Lawns cannot prevent erosion, except in a very superficial way.

Biological Desolation

Fish need food to survive as insects are a crucial element of their diet. A great number of those insects come from trees, shrubs and plants growing along the shoreline of lakes. The natural vegetation supplies food for the fish. Unfortunately, lawns are like biological deserts.

The Sun

Even though lawns have many negative attributes, they nevertheless provide us with a sunny spot where we can enjoy the sun and recharge our batteries. Isn't sunshine part of cottage life? It is not surprising that cottagers regard a deck, a patio or a grassy area as an essential element of the property. It provides a pleasant corner where one can sit and enjoy the summer sun. How can we protect the lake and still enjoy the sun? Is it possible to have a lawn and protect the lake at the same time? Yes, but under one condition: the lawn must be located beyond the shore (10 to 15 metres from the shoreline). The vegetation of the shoreline must be present to stop the fertilizers from going into the lake and to protect the lake from too much sun. Warning! Not only must the lawns be kept 10 to 15 metres away from the shoreline, they must also be reduced to the smallest possible size.

In the city, lawns give life to a sterile environment greatly covered with asphalt, concrete and stones. Green spaces greatly improve the quality of life of citizens. However, it is a whole different story around lakes. Lawns don't improve the environment of lakes. They are a negative attribute. A lawn is like a wasteland, whereas a forest is a rich and diversified natural environment.