

Sustainable Marshfield Committee – July 2013 Marshfield NewsHerald article

- Julie Schafer

Several years ago, I was coming back from a run, walking across a public lawn, heading to my car. Upon crossing the lawn, I saw one of those little flags with the date and picture of people and pets circled with a line through. Unfortunately there either had not been a sign where I entered the lawn, or I had not seen it. Ugh. I had just walked across a lawn that had recently been ‘treated’ with some combination of fertilizer/herbicide/pesticide. Now what?

With two small children and a dog at home, I did not want to risk the chance of bringing whatever the treatment was into my home. I threw the (fairly new) shoes away and jumped in the shower as soon as I got home. Drastic? Perhaps. Not knowing what I had just walked through, I wasn’t taking any chances.

I have also crossed the street while walking my dog, just to avoid an area of sidewalk that had the tell-tale smell of ‘lawn treatment’ and the granules scattered across it. If getting that on my shoes is bad, then getting it on my dog’s paws is even worse.

I realize many people take pride in their lawns and landscapes, as they should. Yards are where hundreds of creatures play and live, including people, pets and outside critters. They provide beauty and help clean the air. I am only asking that we think about how we manage our yards so that they look as we like them to look without hurting the environment. The EPA has an excellent website with tips and suggestions for managing lawns and landscapes via alternatives to herbicide (spot-treating, weed pulling) and pesticide use as well as ways to avoid the harmful environmental effects of fertilizer run-off (minimal application, according to soil tests). Their website is

<http://www.epa.gov/reg3wcmd/pesticideslawn.htm>. Check it out; then act. You’ll be glad you did.