



## **Turf Management for a Healthier Lawn**

In many areas of the State, property developers are commonly placing little or no top soil on newly developed residential and commercial lots. A relatively small expenditure is needed to create a balanced soil composition that will sustain and grow healthy turf and landscaping that will not require excess water or fertilizer. However, when developers begin to establish turf seed in areas with little to no top soil, the purchaser of the property is often burdened with years of expensive rehabilitation including increased and sometimes unnecessary applications of water and fertilizers, which contribute nonpoint source pollution.

In East Greenwich, many new developments have been affected by this practice. Since many new developments are being constructed on farmland, top soil is being stripped and little attention is being paid to the soil composition prior to seeding. The result has been inefficient use of poor soils that will not allow penetration of the water or fertilizer creating a situation of water waste and runoff.

Turf Management for a Healthier Lawn Program has partnered with the Brickman group to recreate two lawns in a healthy, sustainable nature for use as demonstration and study sites. To rectify the issue created by the soil stripping, a two month long process of killing off invading weeds, installing 55 yards of compost, preparing the soils, and hydro seeding is necessary. One of the two demonstration sites will also feature a Smart Irrigation system. The other site will be hand-watered for establishment but will not be irrigated once established.

This process is typically very costly and financially burdensome to new home owners ranging from \$25,000-\$35,000 to renovate just 1 acre property. The New Jersey Water Savers Program will develop a Best Management Practices Guide for homeowners and a model New Development and Soil Composition Ordinance that municipalities facing this problem can choose to adopt to prevent soil stripping in their towns. In addition, a workshop has been developed and will be offered free of charge to residents in Egg Harbor Township, East Greenwich and Belmar on the in late June 2010.