

JANUARY 2025

## WHAT WE DO

PJC Organic is the manufacturer of ProHealthy Turf Organic Products & distributor of soil amendments. We provide product and support to landscapers, schools, & municipalities that want to transition from a conventional approach to an All-Natural Organic Turf Care program for the maintenance of their lawns & athletic fields.

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## CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT

## STAPLE LANDSCAPES

I, Pam Newcombe, spent some time talking with Nick Staples; Co-Owner of Staple Landscapes and PJC customer since fall 2023. We discussed Nick's professional journey, business development, and journey with organic land care. Buckle up for a great conversation summarized below.

### 1. How did you get started in the landscape industry?

It's kind of that classic story. When I was younger, I was knocking on people's doors, asking them if they wanted me to shovel in the winter or mow their lawns in the summer. After graduating high school, I started my business as a sole proprietor doing basic maintenance: mowing, cleanups, etc. I've since added a business partner, and over the past 9 years, we have grown to 30 employees and evolved to where we are now.

### 2. What services do you offer?

Our business is still all maintenance, and about 5 years ago we added lawn care. Over time, you need to get more and more focused in order to keep growing and provide a good service. So, we focus on landscape maintenance, lawn care treatments, and plowing. Right now, 1/3 of our company is mowing. Then, the rest is mulch, cleanups, lawn care programs, and shrub trimming. Last year, lawn care [fertilization and weed control] was just under 10% of our business, which we're hoping to grow to 15-20% this year. That's kind of how we landed with you guys [PJC Organic].

When we first started doing lawn care, we just did a traditional 5 step lawn care program. Now, we have two options:

1. Our Traditional Program includes synthetic & organic fertilizer, lime, crabgrass prevention, and grub control.
2. Our Organic Program includes soil testing, PJC ProHealthy Turf 6-o-6, BOOST+S3 and lime. Fiesta for broad leaf weeds and cedar cure for grub control.

Since we started working with you guys, we now have the ability to upsell both of those programs to 8 applications using the soil tests PJC provides. We are creating a system for clients to understand why they should be doing those additional applications. PJC's soil testing is honestly part of the reason I was so sold on working with you.

### 3. Why offer organic lawn care?

There are a lot of reasons. From the personal side, I don't like to have our employees do something I wouldn't like to do and am always asking "What can I do to lessen chemical exposure?"...Obviously we're safe; we wear PPE, we do all the things you are supposed to do, and that is effective when you do it right—Although, if you can use less chemicals, that is even better because you are mitigating risk. From the customer side, most people ask, "Is this safe? How long do I have to stay off the lawn? What stuff do you use?" I am committed to full transparency with my customers. (cont. p2)



NICK STAPLES

# CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT *Staple Landscapes (cont...)*

When I first got into the industry, I was shocked by the lack of transparency in how information is presented...and I think if more people knew what actually was going on, they wouldn't want to do it. There's an underlying want from people; they don't want to do things that are bad for the environment or bad for their health. So, when companies disguise it and wrap it up in a certain way with only what you are legally obligated to say, then most people are so busy they don't even question it. So, that was my observation from the client-facing side.

It's also great from an environmental perspective. It allows us to use more organic products. We've seen first hand the healthier a lawn is, the less weed control/chemicals you need to use. Disease used to be an issue, and now it isn't. So, even in our Traditional Program, we're not going to use as many chemicals, and that's important to us. One of the greatest things working with you guys is you are a resource for information and education (blogs, newsletters, accessible, etc.).

#### 4. How has your approach to organic turf care changed?

Earlier, what was presented to me as an 'organic option', is not what we do now. There was no focus on soil health. The actual products were misconstrued, that if there were no pesticides it was 'organic', which is not the true distinction of what organic lawn care is. That understanding has been an evolution. This past year, we have been focusing on soil testing as a tool to inform how we treat the lawn. With the soil testing tool, we can understand how each product affects the turf, and how likely crabgrass or different weeds and diseases are to come in...it's just a matter of learning and figuring out how to incorporate it into our program. In 2025, we are going to soil test all our customers for free, which we're excited about.

#### 5. What is one of your main challenges in your day-to-day?

One of the hardest things is expectation setting for your customers and communication. Trying to deliver a service and then, throughout the year, keep a customer in the loop with what is going on and communicate seasonal and other changes – that's one of the hardest things of this business in general. If you don't do a good job of that, you end up with a lot of issues and complaints that were avoidable.

#### 6. Something you would want someone reading this to know?

If you own a landscape company and you want a more profitable service to add — rather than doing big projects and things like that — become that organic niche. Especially with the way you guys [PJC Organic] recommend doing it, it's a no-brainer. It's such a good lead magnet...it's recurring revenue, you don't need a license, it's profitable, and nobody else is doing it.

*Staple Landscapes operates out of Plainville, Massachusetts. For more information on their lawn mowing, seasonal cleanups, lawn care, mulching, aeration, shrub trimming, and snow plowing, visit their [website](#), or follow on [Instagram](#)! PJC Organic and Staple Landscapes connected through Instagram.*

AP  
IN THE  
NEWS

## CHEMICALS IN SEWAGE SLUDGE FERTILIZER POSE CANCER RISK, EPA SAYS

by Michael Phillis, January 14, 2025

"Harmful chemicals in sewage sludge that is spread on pasture land as fertilizer are causing cancer, the Environmental Protection Agency said Tuesday. The risk is highest for people who regularly consume milk, beef and other products from farms where it is spread. The risk is "several orders of magnitude" above what it considers acceptable, the agency said.

When cities and towns treat sewage, they separate the liquids from the solids and treat the liquid. The solids need to be disposed of and can make a nutrient-rich sludge often spread on farm fields. The agency now says those solids often contain toxic, lasting PFAS that treatment plants cannot effectively remove.

When people eat or drink foods containing these "forever" chemicals, the compounds accumulate in the body and can cause kidney, prostate and testicular cancer. They also harm the immune system and childhood development.

...Organic farms aren't allowed to use the sludge, so the findings could reassure consumers who purchase organic grass-fed beef, although farms that transitioned to being organic may have had it applied earlier." [read more >](#)

# TURF TOPIC: Healthy Turf - A Practical Approach

When it comes to growing turf, there are things we cannot control in the season and things that are impractical to change. We call PJC's approach 'practical' because we focus on correcting things that cultivate positive change in a way that makes sense financially and in practice.

It starts with the soil - healthy soil for growing healthy turf means addressing Soil Chemistry, Soil Biology, Soil Structure, and Cultural Practices. As such, we developed our Healthy Turf Circle as the keystone to our practical approach. Each part of this wheel is tantamount to the others in organic turf care.

Soil Chemistry - create and maintain a hospitable environment for growing turf by correcting pH and calcium to magnesium imbalances. For turf grass, we consider 6.2-6.9 an acceptable range, 6.5-6.7 is ideal. This is important because the availability of plant nutrients increases tremendously when soil pH is in this range. A soil test will provide the information you need to determine product choices.

Soil Biology - feed the microbes in the soil PJC's ProHealthy Turf All-Natural Organic Fertilizer so they remain active and in turn can feed the grass plant.

Soil Structure - promote the porosity and nutrient holding capacity of the soil by improving organic matter and cation exchange capacity (CEC). Soils with higher organic matter and CEC can better hold onto water and nutrients making them available for the turf plant when it needs them.

Cultural Practices - Proper mowing, aeration, over-seeding, and irrigation practices will have a BIG impact on the overall success of your program! No matter how good your products are, you can sink your program if you don't pay close attention to your cultural practices

Each part of this wheel is tantamount to the others in order to implement a successful organic turf care.



## PRODUCT PROMO: SOIL TESTING

PJC Organic will give you the confidence to deliver a successful all-natural organic turf fertilization program—starting from the soil up. Taking a soil sample is not hard, but interpreting soil test results can be challenging. Often you get the results back, and if it's not Greek to you - it will be to your customer.

### Let PJC do the work for you!

- We send you the soil sampling supplies.
- You take a sample and mail it to the lab.
- PJC gets the results and interprets them making product recommendations in light of an organic program
- You get an easy-to-understand document with your company logo to share with your customer or prospect PLUS a Master Product Application Chart broken down by client and square footage.



### ...All in a 2 week turn around time!

A soil test is a great tool to use in setting customer expectations and setting budget priorities.

More soil testing info: [Soil Sample instructions](#) Video.

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MORE PROMOS ON PAGE 4...

# PRODUCT PROMO

## Organic Turf Care SUPPORT SERVICES

Not sure where to begin with organic turf care? We're here to help. Our longstanding practical approach has helped landscapers, schools, and municipalities make the switch to organic turf care for over 20 years!

LEARN MORE:

[Organic Turf Care Simplified PDF](#) + [10 Steps to Organic Turf Care PDF](#)



## Support Services for Landscapers

Business owners face decisions in the off-season on how to grow in the upcoming year.

Starting an organic turf care division in your landscaping business can be profitable AND impactful.

PJC is more than just a manufacturer of premium Organic Turf Care Products for landscapers. As such, our customer relationships go beyond product sales. We share expertise, develop turf care programs, troubleshoot issues, and provide solutions throughout the season. PJC Organic gives landscapers the confidence to deliver a successful all-natural Organic Turf Care Program. Whether you're looking for an organic fertilization program you can offer clients or looking for new organic turf care products to incorporate into your existing model.

Since 2002, PJC has run an Organic Fertilization division as a way to field test and evaluate our products and programs. As a result...we know what works.

CHECK OUT: [Starting an Organic Turf Care Division in Your Landscaping Business](#)

## Support Services for Schools & Municipalities

Schools and municipalities are showing their students and the community the importance of environmental stewardship. How to make the change can be challenging while trying to juggle your other responsibilities. PJC Organic works with your maintenance team and/or service provider to tailor an All-Natural OTC program that is easy to follow, effective, and fits your budget. We know organic turf care can seem daunting - [CONTACT US](#).

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IN THE  
NEWS

## PFAS IN SEWAGE SLUDGE USED AS FERTILIZER

Sierra Club:  
Executive Summary



SIERRA  
CLUB

"Many home gardeners buy compost or commercial soil amendments to enhance soil nutrition. But new tests reveal concerning levels of toxic chemicals known as PFAS in fertilizer products which are commonly made from sewage sludge. These "forever chemicals" were found in all of the nine products tested by the Ecology Center of Michigan and Sierra Club and marketed as "eco" or "natural" and eight of the nine exceeded screening levels set by the state of Maine. PFAS in fertilizers could cause garden crops to be a source of exposure for home gardeners.

PFAS are per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances, a class of widely used industrial chemicals, that persist for decades in the environment, many of which are toxic to people." [read more >](#)

# UPCOMING EVENTS



# WINTER TURF TIPS

## Pam's PJC Presentation!

### A Practical Approach to Organic Turf Care

Diversify and increase your revenue with organic fertilization services! Learn the principles of organic turf care through our "Healthy Turf Circle." We'll talk about soil testing, product selection, cultural practices, how to package an OTC program, and what a calendar for the season looks like.

Jan 22 | 5:30 - 8:00 pm | North Hampton, NH



LEARN MORE



## MELNA Grow Maine Green Expo

MELNA's annual meeting and trade show is a day full of education seminars, our Awards Luncheon, a Trade Show, a Keynote Address, and great fellowship and networking.

Jan 22, 2025 | Augusta, ME



LEARN MORE



## 38th Annual NOFA/Mass Winter Conference

-An exploration of regional soil health and food access through regenerative and organic practices.

-A celebration of community resilience.

-An opportunity for connection and skill building!

Feb 1 | UMass Amherst



LEARN MORE



## CT Turf & Landscape Conference

Conference hosted by Connecticut Grounds Keepers Association

Feb 18 | 8am - 4pm | Southington, CT



LEARN MORE



## 2025 ELA Annual Conference & Eco Marketplace

virtual and in-person attendance options

11:00 am EST - Fri, Feb 28 @ 8:00 pm EST



LEARN MORE



### 1. Avoid Excessive Foot Traffic

With a potential La Nina this winter—and following fall droughts—we may not experience a large snow-pack this winter or a solid freeze to help protect grass. Turf is most susceptible to crown damage early in the morning, when frost has formed on the crown of the plant.

### 2. Avoid Over-Using Ice Melt

During snow events, be mindful of using salt based products. Salt is not good for your turf, pets, or our waterways. Act early with shoveling or snow blowing to keep walkways and driveways clear, allowing the sun to melt the snow and ice. If necessary, choose one of the salt-free ice melts on the market. Then plan to incorporate a calcium product like Gypsum in the Spring to help reduce the impact from salt along walks and driveways.

### 3. Maintain Your Equipment

Don't wait until Spring to get your equipment ready for the season...

- Get fuel stabilizers into your gas tanks.
- Replace fuel filters.
- Sharpen mower blades and purchase additional sets so you always have sharp blades at the ready.
- Add string trimmer line.
- Take stock of parts and product inventory.
- Stock up on soil testing supplies, and reach out if you need more!

### 4. Business Development

PJC offers many Support Services for landscapers to keep your Organic Turf Care business growing and profitable. We have 20+ years of tried and true practical experience we are waiting to share.

Follow us on [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) & check out our [Blog](#).

We regularly post industry news, events, products, & cultural practices.

