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Environmental Education Watershed Stewardship Conservation Programs

Meadows – The New Standard for Large Suburban Parcels
(Summarized from "Meadows in Southeastern Pennsylvania" Natural Lands Trust, April 1988)

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Across suburbia, the landscape is dominated by expanses of mown grass lawns. These intensely managed lawns are often the standard by which neighborhoods and business parks are judged to be well-tended and prosperous or downtrodden and shoddy.

But lawn grasses require a significant amount of maintenance to meet this standard – fertilizing, mowing and weeding can be time-consuming and expensive. In addition, lawn grasses are non-native, not well acclimated to the heat of summer and require regular watering to stay green through July and August.

The approach of spring is the perfect time to start planning a new approach to large lawn maintenance. Meadows are an important component of the natural landscape and with limited maintenance, most large suburban lots can be transformed into an exciting vista with colors and inhabitants that add interest and function to an otherwise static landscape.

Most lawn grasses are "cool season grasses" that thrive from April to June but then die back during the heat of summer. "Warm season grasses" are native to southeastern PA and are naturally adapted to local soils and climate, meaning they can survive just fine with little water and even in periods of drought. Warm season grasses can also grow in