

What Lawn Care Customers Want to Know About Pet Safety



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The first time a customer calls your business, he or she has already made a decision to get help with the lawn. It's important to be able to answer client questions, with the person answering the phone aware of the most common questions and answers.

For Gregg Hinegardner, owner of [First Class Lawn Care LLC](#) in Bridgewater, Virginia, questions usually start with a problem the client is having with the lawn and then lead to the organic approach to lawn care in first class markets. "When people call, usually the first thing they ask is if we can help with the weeds in their lawns," he explains. "Then they ask if we offer free estimates. We often get asked if we only do organic lawn care or if we provide chemicals, too? And people always ask if our products will harm their dogs."

"People often ask us if our treatments are pet friendly," agrees Bob Devine, manager at Central Connecticut Lawn Service in Berlin, Connecticut.

With pesticides constantly in the news, many potential clients are concerned about what is applied to their lawns.

"A lot of homeowners are very concerned about the safety of the products we use," says Devine. "There has been so much press about how 'chemicals' in our environment are causing diseases, specifically cancer, that many people are wary of anything that's not 'natural.'"

"At least a couple of times a day," he adds, "I have discussions with people who have concerns about the safety of lawn care products. Strange that they do not seem so concerned with our tree and shrub care products. I think a lot of people think we all still use similar products as we did in the '70s and '80s."

"A lot of people are concerned with the amount of pesticides that lawn care companies are using," Hinegardner adds. "People are concerned about keeping up with their neighbor's weed-free lawn, but do not want to use pesticides. Most people want to have a healthy-looking lawn for a price within their budgets. I feel like I need to be the steward of my properties. I always try to explain to my customers that if I use pesticides it will be minimal, using IPM [integrated pest management] to keep the pest at bay. On the other hand, though, I also think some people really don't care what you are spraying."

Jack Robertson, owner of [Robertson Lawn Care](#) in Springfield, Illinois, says his Midwest customers don't seem to be as concerned about chemical use. "We are surrounded by farms and people are used to – and OK with – responsible use of chemicals."

Next, come some typical questions about the company and its pricing. "Sometimes customers will ask what makes us different from other lawn services," Devine says. "And, of course, we are often questioned on whether we can do better on our prices."

"I wish the most common questions were about the end results of our programs," Robertson points out. "If we have a very poor lawn, there is going to be a time frame before you see results. After Dandelion Monday we are flooded with calls from customers who want something done one time, right away. But if we are going to only spray one time with a postemergent, it's better to wait up to 45 days until more weeds have sprouted. That's how we sell the program. We know you have weeds, and that is what you have us for: to eliminate them."

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