3. Mow High, Often and With Sharp Blades

Mowing high—that is, keeping your lawn a bit long—will produce stronger, healthier grass with fewer pest problems.

Longer grass has more leaf surface to take in sunlight. This enables it to grow thicker and develop a deeper root system, which in turn helps the grass survive drought, tolerate insect damage, and fend off diseases. Longer grass also shades the soil surface keeping it cooler, helping it retain moisture, and making it difficult for weeds to germinate and grow.

A lawn's ideal length will vary with the type of grass, but many turf grass species are healthiest when kept between 2-1/2 and 3-1/2 inches. The ruler at the back of this brochure will help you judge the best mowing height for your grass variety. You may have to readjust your mower—most are set too low.

It's also important to mow with sharp blades to prevent tearing and injuring the grass. And it's best to mow often, because grass adjusts better to frequent than infrequent mowing. ***The rule of thumb is to mow often enough that you never cut more than one-third of the height of the grass blades.*** Save some time *and* help your lawn and the environment by leaving short clippings on the grass—where they recycle nitrogen—rather than sending them in bags to the landfill.

You don't have to grow a foot-high meadow to get good results. Just adding an inch will give most lawns a real boost.

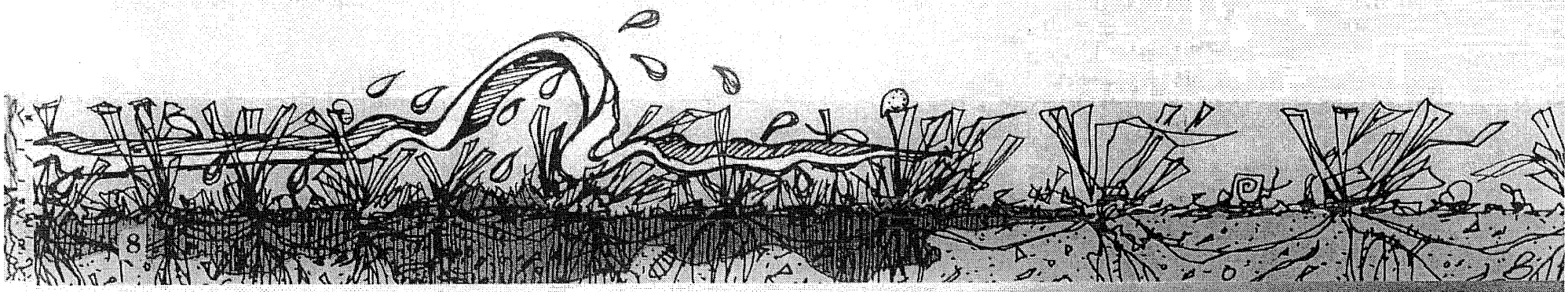
4. Water Deeply But Not Too Often

Watering properly will help your lawn grow deep roots that make it stronger and less vulnerable to drought. Most lawns are watered too often but with too little water. ***It's best to water only when the lawn really needs it, and then to water slowly and deeply.*** This trains the grass roots down. Frequent shallow watering trains the roots to stay near the surface, making the lawn less able to find moisture during dry periods.

Every lawn's watering needs are unique: they depend on local rainfall, the grass and soil type, and the general health of the lawn. But even in very dry areas, no established home lawn should require daily watering.

Try to water your lawn in a way that imitates a slow, soaking rain, by using trickle irrigation, soaker hoses, or other water-conserving methods. It's also best to water in the early morning, especially during hot summer months, to reduce evaporation. Apply about an inch of water—enough that it soaks 6–8 inches into the soil. Then let the lawn dry out thoroughly before watering it again.

The best rule is to water only when the lawn begins to wilt from dryness--when the color dulls and footprints stay compressed for more than a few seconds.

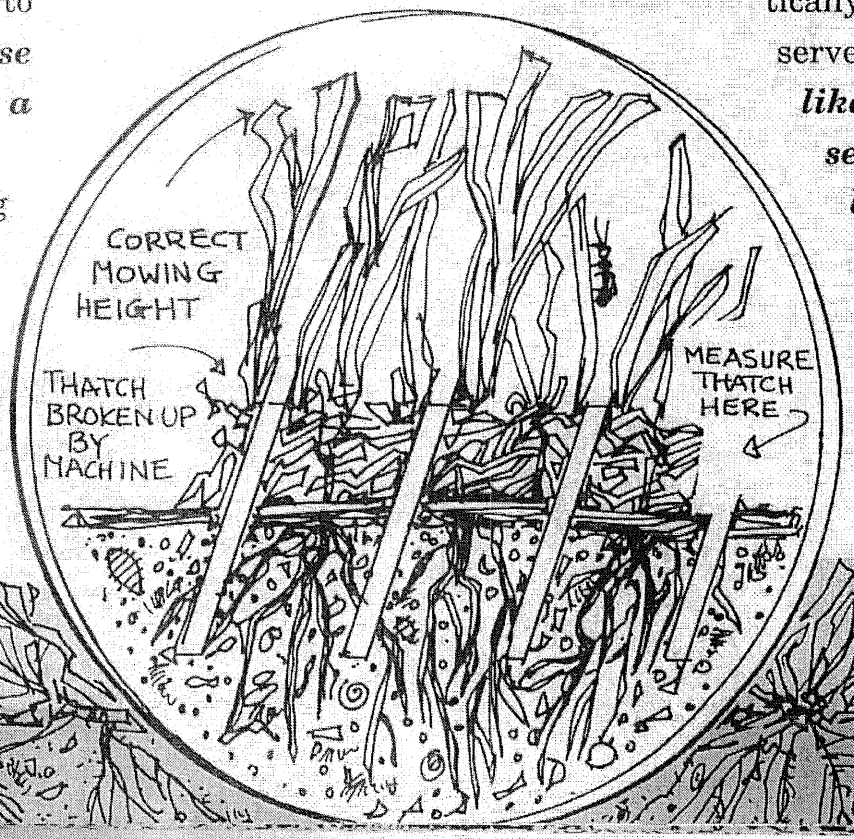


5. Correct Thatch Build-Up

All grass forms a layer of dead plant material, known as thatch, between the grass blades and the soil. When thatch gets too thick—deeper than one-half inch—it prevents water and nutrients from penetrating to the soil and grass roots. Some grasses tend to form a thick layer of thatch. ***Overuse of fertilizer can also create a heavy layer of thatch.***

You can reduce thatch by raking the lawn or using a machine that slices through the thatch layer to break it up. Sprinkling a thin layer of topsoil or compost over the lawn will also help.

In a healthy lawn, microorganisms and earthworms help keep the thatch layer in balance by decomposing it and releasing the nutrients into the soil.



6. Set Realistic Goals

Setting realistic goals will allow you to conduct an environmentally sensible lawn care program. It's probably not necessary to aim for putting-green perfection. Did you know that a lawn with 15 percent weeds can look practically weed-free to the average observer? ***Even a healthy lawn is likely to have some weeds or insect pests. But it will also have beneficial insects and other organisms that help keep pests under control.***

Also realize that grass just can't grow well in certain spots. Why fight a losing battle

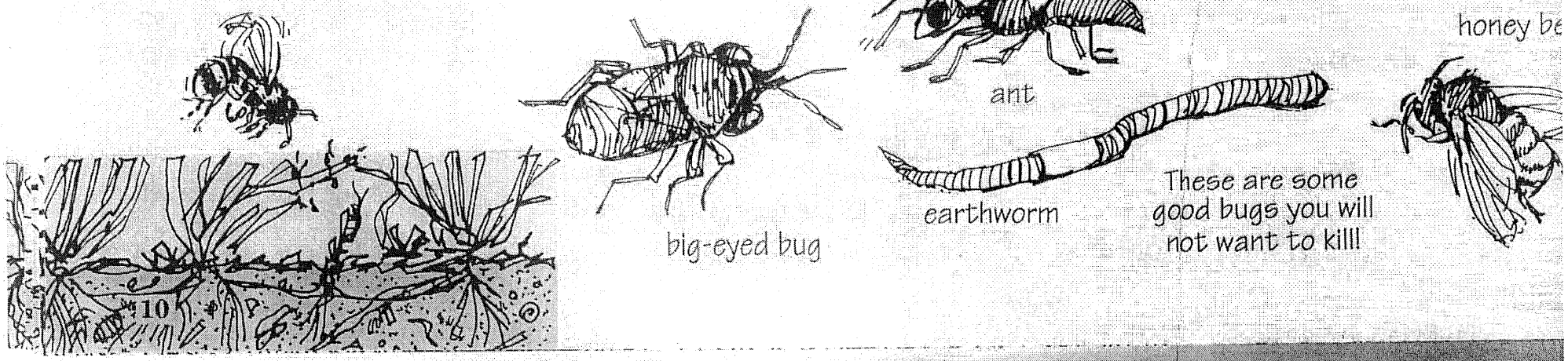
with your lawn, when you have other options? At the base of a tree, for example, you might have better luck with wood chips or shade-loving ornamental plants like ivy, periwinkle, or pachysandra. If your climate is very dry, consider converting some of your lawn to dry-garden landscaping. It could save time, money, and water resources.

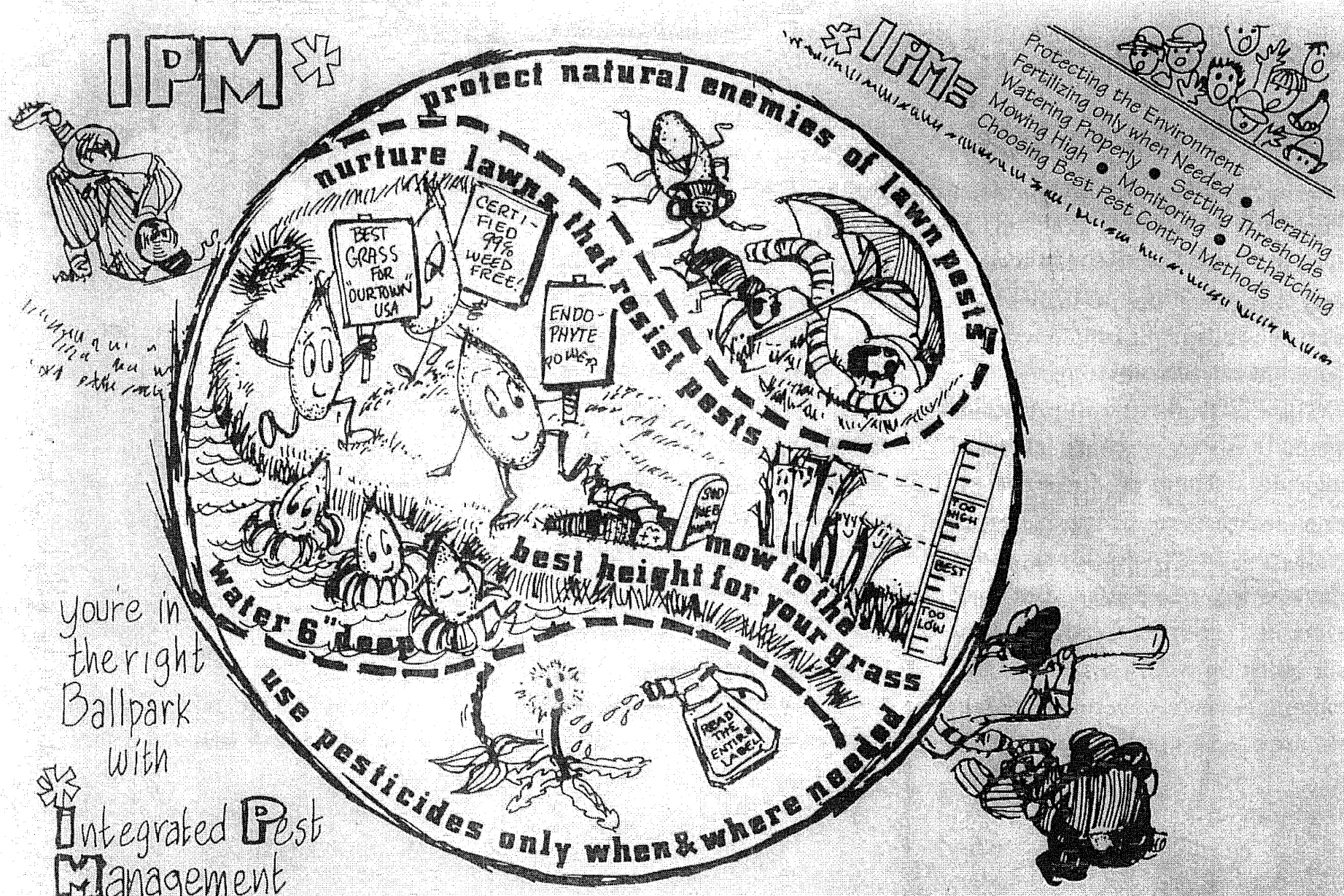
What Is IPM?

Integrated Pest Management is essentially common-sense pest control. IPM is not a new concept; some forms of it have been practiced for centuries.

IPM involves the carefully managed use of three different pest control tactics—biological, cultural, and chemical—to get the best long-term results with the least disruption of the environment. Biological control means using natural enemies of the pest, like lady bugs to control aphids. Cultural or horticultural control involves the use of gardening method like mowing high to shade out weed Chemical control involves the jud cious use of pesticides.

IPM is a highly effective approac that minimizes the use of pesticid and maximizes the use of natur processes. Lawn care professiona who use IPM should have a sophist cated understanding of the ecosyste of your turf and the available pe control tactics. Home gardeners ca also practice IPM by following t steps outlined in this brochure.




IPM
protect natural enemies of lawn pests
nurture lawns that resist pests
mow to the best height for your grass
water 6" deep
use pesticides only when & where needed
BEST GRASS FOR "OUR TOWN" USA
CERTIFIED 99% WEED FREE!
ENDOPHYTE POWER
SOD WEB
TOO HIGH
BEST
TOO LOW
READ THE ENTIRE LABEL!
IPM
Protecting the Environment
Fertilizing only when Needed • Aerating
Watering Properly • Setting Thresholds
Mowing High • Monitoring • Dethatching
Choosing Best Pest Control Methods
You're in the right Ballpark with
Integrated Pest Management