



Unique Garden Centre

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LAWN MAINTENANCE

Whatever kind of lawn you have installed or inherited, it will require some care and attention on regular basis to ensure that it always looks it's best. Care in the areas of watering, fertilizing, and seasonal care will insure a beautiful lush yet easy care lawn.

Watering

Your new turf will require special watering practices in order to establish itself. Once established, the new turf will be quite drought tolerant, however for the first two growing seasons, additional attention should be given to watering. Watering needs will be reduced if you use a mulching mower.

The first two weeks - Your turf usually will require watering every day for the first couple of days and then every other day, depending on the temperature and amount of wind at the time.

The first season - The remainder of the active growing season (generally the end of August or mid September) maintain a watering schedule of about two times a week depending on the temperature and rainfall. Water as needed for the rest of the fall to prevent drying out but the needs of the grass will lessen with the shorter days and cooler temperatures.

The second season - The turf should be more established by now and watering should be once a week. During hot spells, water more frequently as the turf will not have enough roots to withstand drought weather. Follow the same water reduction for the fall.

For established turf - Deep watering is the key to water conservation. The average lawn requires about 1" of water every 5 to 7 days. A single, slow, gentle watering will allow the water to soak down to all the roots, reducing water wastage and providing more water to the roots. Several shallow waterings or high pressure fast watering, results in water run off in the gutter. Reduce watering as mentioned above for fall.

Fertilizing

It is recommended to fertilize your lawn 4 times a year. This provides the proper nutrients at the right time of year. There is a strong temptation to provide the whole years nutrient needs in one application. This camel concept is wasteful because much of the nitrogen will be used or dissipated by the end of the season. Shortly after a one-shot application the grass grows so fast that the lawn mower hardly cools off between mowing sessions. This time saving thought of one application just increased the weekly maintenance requirements. Another benefit to a fertilized lawn is its ability to deter weed growth, thus reducing the need for weed killers.

When to fertilize - Most lawns require 4 feedings per year. The first three applications should be during the growing season – early May, late June and early August. The fourth application should be saved for late fall, just before the ground freezes hard for the winter. This fall fertilizer is then ready to go to work as soon as growth commences the following spring.

Recommended fertilizer – Lawn fertilizers are sold based on the nutrient contained. For example 16-20-0, contains 16% nitrogen, 20% phosphorus, 0% soluble potash. Slow release fertilizers release the nitrogen gradually, feeding the grass for a longer period of time. What type of fertilizer to use depends primarily on the time of year.

The first and last application of fertilizer should be a high phosphorus fertilizer (second number). This type of fertilizer will promote the root growth of the grass. A grass with deep roots will be better prepared to gather moisture and nutrients thus reducing the need for watering. The late fall application should also contain potassium which aids in cold protection. The second and third applications should be a high nitrogen fertilizer (first number). This produces the lush green growth that is desired.

Seasonal Growth

Annual maintenance of the lawn increases the desired characteristics of grass, keeps the grass healthy and reduces the opportunity for insects, weeds and diseases to establish in the lawn.

Dethatching the lawn: Dethatching is an annual springtime ritual performed on many home lawns. The purpose is to remove dead grass and winter grime that may have packed in around the crown of the grass and allow for proper air and moisture movement to fight lawn diseases. *This procedure should not be done on a first or second year lawn.* New lawns will not be established enough and dethatching may rip the entire plant out of the ground. On established lawns, dethatching may be done each spring or every other spring, depending on the condition of the lawn at the time. If you bag all of your grass clippings, you may only need to rake or use a stiff bristled broom to lift the nap of the grass. Excess thatch does serve as a breeding zone for pest and disease and also tends to reduce water penetration to the grass roots, however, clippings from a light mowing left on the lawn will not significantly contribute to thatch buildup and will help conserve moisture and eventually return some nutrient to the soil.

Mowing: Regular mowing at 3 to 5 cm (1 ¼ to 2 inches) is recommended for our region, leaving the grass even slightly longer through hot spells to help conserve moisture. The final mowing of the year should be fairly short (1”) to help prevent snow mold in the spring.

Fall / Winter Maintenance: Reduce watering and mowing to ‘as required’. Clean up fallen leaves off the grass as they accumulate. Leaves left on the grass over winter can smother and leave dead spots and increase the opportunity of snow mold. An lastly, no short cutting across the grass when it is frozen! This is particularly important in late winter, when trampled, slushy snow can cause severe crown damage to the grass. Although very hardy, with the ability to withstand our dry, cold conditions, grass can be killed when the crowns are surrounded by ice-cold water.