

Care & Maintenance of Your Newly Installed Lawn

Proper lawn maintenance / lawn care in the first year is the key to a healthy lawn

Lawn Watering Tips

Below are a few helpful lawn watering tips for a recently installed lawn.

Lawn Installed Using Seed

Until germination, keep the soil moist but not waterlogged. After germination, water as necessary depending on the temperature and soil composition.

Lawn Installed Using Sod

Day 1 & Day 2

After installation, saturate the lawn with water. This is very important, especially in hot weather.

Day 3 Thru 13

One inch of water per day keeps the lawn moist up to a depth of 4". To help determine the length of time for watering, place a container on the lawn, when it fills to an inch of water, the lawn has had enough. In hot weather, water 3 times per day to a combined total of 1 inch.

After 2 Weeks (or when the roots have become established)

Assuming the roots have become established, now is the time to reduce watering. In hot weather, a good soaking (1 inch of water) once a week will generally suffice. Lawns on sandy soil may require watering twice a week. Light watering every day can do a lawn more harm than good, promoting shallow root growth. Long spells without water in hot weather can help to promote weeds and disease.

After 2 Months

Now, the best time to water is in the early morning so that the lawn gets the full benefit of the water by avoiding the evaporation that occurs in the heat of the day.

Lawn Mowing Tips

Mowing mistakes can be disastrous. Below are a few helpful lawn mowing tips.

- Never mow more than 1/3 of the total grass height (even less on the first cut) as it can send the grass into shock.
- Try to cut the grass to a consistent height with each mowing.
- A height of 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ to 2 inches is recommended for most lawns, but never less than 1 inch. Try to leave it slightly longer in the summer.
- Don't allow the grass to grow higher than 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches (especially a seeded lawn).
- It is best to cut the grass when it is dry, however it is better to cut it wet than allow it to exceed 3 inches in height.

- Newly installed sod lawns will usually require cutting within the first week (don't allow the grass to grow higher than 2 ½ inches). Subsequent mowing frequency should be every 4 to 5 days in the first 40 days after installation (especially important in shady areas). Keep off the grass for at least 3 weeks except to mow and water.
- Never leave the grass clippings on the lawn during the first few months. Subsequent to this time, mulch if you use a high quality mulching mower.
- Keep the blades of your mower very sharp.
- Cut at right angles to the previous cut.
- Cut once a week.

Lawn Fertilizing Tips

Over fertilizing is as bad as not fertilizing. Below are a few helpful lawn fertilizing tips.

- In the first year, feeding the lawn is crucial. Measure your lawn to determine the exact amount of fertilizer required. Follow the manufacturer's recommendations.
- Even fertilizer distribution is essential to prevent burning the lawn so use a proper spreader. Divide the fertilizer into 2 parts and apply each in different directions.
- The soil base should be moist and the grass blades dry (to avoid burning) when fertilizing.
- If it doesn't rain within two days of applying fertilizer, water thoroughly.
- Fertilizing helps build resistance to drought and disease and the resulting closely knit turf makes it difficult for weeds to become established.
- Avoid fertilizing in the hot summer months or during a drought.
- A new lawn should be fertilized 3 to 4 weeks after installation.
- Slow release fertilizers are best. Look for fertilizers with the numbers 23-3-23 (or similar). Fertilize in the early spring, late spring and again in the early fall and late fall. Follow up with an appropriate winter fertilizer and always follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Shade turf needs less fertilizer and water and does not tolerate high nitrogen fertilizers.
- Organic fertilizers are more environmentally friendly and possibly safer for pets and children who may put their fingers in their mouths after touching the grass. Caution is recommended when using any kind of fertilizer.
- A new lawn should be de-thatched (power raked) in spring, if applicable.
- Aerate your lawn, if applicable, in the spring and fall, but only when the soil is moist. This will improve the drainage, help stop soil compaction and stimulate growth. Top dressing with ¼" of lawn appropriate soil may also be beneficial but is not always necessary.
- Removal of leaves in the fall, on a regular basis so that they don't lay on the grass for more than a few days, is essential.
- Get rid of weeds and moss as soon as they appear.
- Dolomite lime the lawn every spring and fall, if proven to be needed by the results of a soil test.
- Try to keep off the lawn when the ground is frozen. This will help to avoid fungal growth.

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