

Making Your Lawn The One To Envy

Are you putting off lawn-care jobs because they seem too overwhelming to handle? Here's some great information for how to tackle those common problems and how make your lawn the one to envy.

Is Your Yard Dull, Yellowing and Lifeless?

Problem: You probably have an excessive amount of accumulated thatch

Solution: Thatching

Equipment Needed: Dethatcher

Thatch is a layer of dead stems, roots and clippings between the soil's surface and green vegetation. This keeps your lawn from receiving vital nutrients. If there is a layer of a half-inch or more:

- Water and air are unable to reach the grass roots
- Herbicides with soil residual action settle in the top layer of the soil
- You are nurturing an attractive breeding ground for insects and disease

A Dethatcher:

- Mechanically removes the accumulated thatch
- Uses steel flail blades or rigid wire tines to slice through the turf
- Lifts the debris to the surface

Dethatching may cause temporary damage to the turf or browning for a short time. To speed the recovery of the lawn, it's essential to remove the thatch debris with a hand rake or lawn vacuum.

Is Your Lawn Health Deteriorating?

Problem: Your lawn is suffering from turf deterioration due to compaction of the soil caused by heavy foot and mowing traffic

Solution: Aeration

Equipment Needed: Aerator

Lawn traffic can create compaction of the top 2-3 inches of soil. Turf deterioration typically results when compacted soil particles reduce the area where roots can grow.

Aeration can relieve compacted soil through its process of mechanically removing cores or plugs of turf. By removing the cores:

- More water and nutrients can reach the grass roots
- You'll be able to decrease the frequency of watering and herbicide application

For optimal effectiveness, aeration should be performed at least once annually.

Ideal aeration times for cool-season grasses, such as perennial ryegrass and Kentucky bluegrass:

- Spring - between March and May
- Fall - between August and November

Does your lawn need some serious renovation?

Problem: Typical problems include winter damage, dryness, excessive rain and/or poor drainage.

Solution: Overseeding

Equipment Needed: Slit seeder, Grass Seed

You need to identify and correct your problem before making the decision to replace the lawn or overseed. If a damaged lawn has at least 50-percent healthy turf, consider overseeding.

Overseeding is the process of planting grass seeds over an existing lawn. It is an ideal solution when:

- Bare spots exist
- You wish to improve the appearance of the lawn with more suitable grass varieties

A slice seeder uses slicing blades that cut through the soil, opening small furrows about 2 inches to deposit the seeds. When overseeding, it is recommended to make two passes at 45-degree angles at half the recommended rate of seed.

A slit seeder offers higher germination than a broadcasting seeder because seeds get deeper into the soil. [After overseeding, delay any herbicide treatments for at least four to six weeks.](#)

Information provided by the ARA.