



Lawn Care Guide

Simple steps to help you grow and maintain a lush and healthy lawn all year long

The Basics

Soil: Not dirt! Soil is a mixture of organic and inorganic materials, microorganisms, nutrients, air and moisture.

Peat Moss: Decomposed sphagnum mosses.

Lime: Lime is an important source of calcium and magnesium for your lawn and garden. It is a basic substance and used to increase soil pH, thus helping to neutralize acidic soil (most plants grow best in soils with a pH of 6-7). It is primarily composed of ground limestone, but newer forms such as prilled lime are manufactured and enhanced for easier application.

Aerate: To pull plugs of lawn and soil out of the ground allowing for improved drainage and air circulation. Applying a 1/4" layer of sand over the aerated area will fill the holes and vastly improve drainage.

Thatch: Matted lawn caused by mowing repeatedly in the same direction. The bent grass is often then cut by the mower at the root, killing the grass and causing brown patches.

Overseeding: Sowing grass seed over existing lawn to encourage thick, healthy lawn growth, or to fill in patches.

Did you know: 15m² of a healthy lawn releases enough oxygen daily for a family of four? (Scotts)

Troubleshooting

Weeds

The best control for weeds is a thick, lush lawn where weeds can't get a toe hold and compete with your grass. That said, regular mowing, liming, aeration and overseeding will help you stay on top of things! Weeds are tenacious, however, so you will likely have to deal with them at some point.

With the decrease in availability of broad application herbicides we look to more eco-friendly alternatives. These products work differently than traditional solutions and must be applied when the weather is dry and above 10°C to maximize their effectiveness. Scotts Eco Sense Weed B Gon is a good choice for selective control of broadleaf lawn weeds & dandelions.

Always read the directions on any chemical product you purchase to ensure you are aware of correct: product use and function, mixing and application rates, safety precautions and first aid.

Moss

The only way to truly eliminate moss from your lawn is to burn it off with a quality moss killer (containing iron sulphate). It can be liquid or granular but the procedure is the same. When you are confident of having 48 hours of dry, warm (above 10°C) weather after application, moisten the moss and then apply the moss killer. Once the moss has blackened, rake it out. **To keep moss away:** keep soil from becoming acidic by applying lime in the fall, aerate in the spring and fall, and maintain good nutrient levels with slow-release nitrogen. Try to keep moss off your trees, roofs/sidewalks to prevent spreading too.

Thatch

Thatch is a condition where lawn grasses lay down and you end up mowing bent over grass stems instead of upright grass blades. As a result, the grass is often brown after mowing. You can rent 'dethatchers' or purchase a 'roto rake bar' which is a blade with a spring on both its ends. Simply replace your rotary lawn mower blade with a 'roto rake bar' and tear up the turf, lifting all the bent grass stems. Overseed once complete.

Timing

The activities below depend on your particular lawn care needs (i.e., don't apply moss control if you don't have moss!) and what the weather is doing. Mow and water as needed throughout the year.

January: When using de-icer, try to avoid areas where runoff will impact lawns. Apply lime.

February: Apply lime (if you haven't already).

March: Aerate, rake and apply 1/4" of sand. Fertilize (late March).

April: Apply weed control.

May: Apply moss control. Fertilize.

June: Overseed.

July: Fertilize (if you've missed one round). Watch watering restrictions.

August: Water watering restrictions.

September: Overseed (keep it moist!).

October: Aerate and apply sand. Fertilize.

November: Apply lime.

December: Ensure lawns are raked and free of debris.

Remember, always leave a resting period in between lawn care activities. Wait 'three mowings' or a minimum of two weeks before performing a lawn application.



Checklist

- Top Soil
- Sand
- Peat Moss
- Seed & Sod Starter
- Scott's Slow Release Turf Builder Fertilizer
- Dolopril Lime

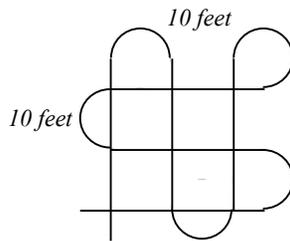


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How to Plant a Lawn

1. Define the borders of your lawn.
2. Rototill thoroughly, 12" to 18" deep, to break up any hard lumps of soil.
3. Rake out all debris, stones, etc.
4. Slope the soil away from your home and level it by dragging a 6" x 6" board over the whole area. Then rake the soil even.
5. With a roller, roll the whole soil area three times, in opposite directions, until firm.
6. Apply a skiff of peat moss to hold moisture for the seed. If the peat is dry, add a little sand to secure it and prevent it from blowing away.
7. Add 'Seed Starter 7-21-7' fertilizer at a rate of one bag per 2000 square feet.
8. Seed using one pound of seed per 200 square feet (.5 Kg per 20 square meters). Spread the seed in opposite, or crisscross, directions. See diagram below.

Step 8: Spreading seed in a crisscross pattern will help ensure better and more even coverage of grass seed. Use one pound of seed per 200 square feet. For this sample, only 1/2 pound of seed is needed.



9. Rake the seed in lightly.
10. Water thoroughly and evenly, but don't let the water puddle. **Keep the seed moist!** New seed must not dry out, especially when they have just germinated.
11. As soon as your new lawn is long enough, mow it – it's like a good first pruning!

TIP: Each time you mow, mow in an alternate direction, i.e. North-South one time, then East-West, then diagonally etc., from the last time. This will keep your grass standing straight and will help prevent thatch from developing.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. *Can I apply lime when I seed?* No. Lime can be applied approximately four weeks before seeding or after the third mowing.
2. *How long after seeding can I fertilize?* Fertilize only after the third mowing.

Lawn Maintenance

Ongoing maintenance takes less time than dealing with continual issues! Healthy lawns are a product of feeding, watering, mowing, overseeding and in our area, regular liming and aerating.

Feeding

A good fertilization program will colour up your lawn, keep it green and cut down on it's overall water requirements. Well fed lawns have root systems that resist heat, drought and wear, and thick top growth that makes it hard for weeds to take hold. Slow-release nitrogen fertilizers are, by far, the best for both lawn grasses and the environment. They keep grass green without excessive growth. Ideally you should feed your lawn three to four times a year, once in early spring, late spring, late summer, and fall. Try using Easter, Victoria Day, Labour Day and Thanksgiving as reminders!

Watering

In our area, regular watering is usually not a problem! Lawns typically need 2.5cm (1") of water a week so that moisture penetrates the root system. Light, more frequent watering is ineffective and encourages the root system to stay shallow, which is not what you want. Watering deeply and less often encourages the roots to go deep and will help your lawn stand up to periods of heat, stress and drought. Use a rain or water gauge if you're not sure about your depth. If using a sprinkler, watch it and adjust the settings as needed...you don't want to waste any of this precious resource on the sidewalk! Should you be watering by hand or with a sprinkler, try to do so in the morning instead of in the afternoon/early evening. Please be sure you always respect municipal water restrictions.

Mowing

Lawns should be mowed to approximately 6cm (just under 2.5") long. This length helps lawns retain moisture, encourages deeper roots and will help resist weed development. Try not to cut off more than one-third when you mow (it's okay to leave this light amount on your lawn... less raking!). Be sure your blades are sharp and alternate your mowing pattern each time to prevent thatch.

Overseeding

Overseeding helps rejuvenate tired lawns and thicken up healthy ones (making it even more difficult for weeds to take hold). To give grass seed a place to take hold, mow your lawn slightly lower than usual, use a rake to scratch up the area to be overseeded and sprinkle a bit of a peat moss/sand mix ovetop. The best seed to use is Elka 3 perennial rye grass or the new 'Natural Knit' spreading rye grass. Perennial rye grasses are usually fine bladed and tremendously resilient, and they add new life and vigour to any lawn. Overseed at a rate of one pound of seed per 200 square feet. The seed will sprout in about five to seven days. Like all grass seed, it must be kept moist the entire time it is germinating and even after seed has sprouted. To get the seed off to a great start, use Seed & Sod Starter. Overseed after curing weed and moss issues as well.

Liming

Liming is very important in our area especially in heavy soils. Winter and spring rains drop the soil pH level and turn it acidic. When this happens, grass is less able to absorb nutrients and moss, which thrives in acid soil, starts to set in. Lime will help adjust the soil pH back to 'neutral', and it is best applied in fall and spring. Dolopril and Doloplus are your best options:

Dolopril Lime: Is specially formulated lime for easier spreading. Provides fast release and long lasting results. A 10kg bag covers 2000 square feet.

Lime is also welcome in garden beds, but be sure to avoid liming your potato patch, and acid loving trees and shrubs such as: azaleas, rhododendrons, camelias, heather and blueberries.

Aerating

Heavy winter and spring rains compact our soils. Aeration opens up the soil to allow oxygen to penetrate in and around the roots. It also creates better drainage and helps deter moss. Lawns should be aerated in the spring and fall, and it can be done properly with either a hand or mechanical aerator that pulls cores of soil out of the lawn. After aerating, rake out the plugs and apply 1/4" of coarse sand (rake it in). This will help keep the plugs open and percolating.