



TEN STEPS TO A BEAUTIFUL LAWN

1. **LIMING** (COASTAL AREAS ONLY) - Due to the large amount of rain we receive on the West Coast, soil pH can become very low. A low soil pH (less than 6.5) suppresses beneficial bacteria and can cause the elements in the soil (particularly phosphorus, calcium, magnesium and sulfur) to be tied up in unavailable forms that the plant cannot use. With the turf depleted of nutrients, moss or weeds can easily become invasive, choking out the grass. Lime should be applied once or twice a year. Application rates are 50# per 1,000 sq. ft. Apply full rate if applying once a year and apply half rate if applying twice a year (spring and fall).
2. **AERATING** - Lawn aeration involves removing cores of soil from the lawn. You can get reasonable results from spiking the turf areas with a garden fork; however, best results are usually achieved through core aeration using an aerator. Aeration will provide good air exchange between the grass roots and the soil, improved fertilizer uptake, reduced heat and drought stress, reduced water runoff and puddling, and aid in root development. Aeration should be done in spring and fall.
3. **DE MOSSING** (COASTAL AREAS ONLY) - Moss is caused by poor drainage, lack of fertilizer, constant shade and acidic conditions (low pH). If moss is a problem, apply a moss control in spring then follow with power raking or hand raking to mechanically remove as much of the moss plants as possible. Apply a moss control to damp moss to ensure good bonding. The grass should be dry for 24 to 48 hours after application to ensure a good kill.
4. **RAKING** - Rake thoroughly in early spring to prevent matting. If moss control has been used or if severe matting exists, the best option is to power rake.
5. **OVERSEEDING** - Over seeding fills in bare patches in the turf and helps to maintain a thick, healthy and aesthetically pleasing stand of turf that is less susceptible to weed and moss encroachment. Over seeding is best done in the fall or spring when the weather is milder. Good contact of the seed with the soil is imperative. This can be accomplished in one of two ways; by raking the lawn after application to work the seed down to the soil, or by topdressing with a 1/2" of sand or soil after application.
6. **TOP DRESSING** - This is ideal after aeration or over seeding, but also has merits if neither have been done. Top dressing will replenish depleted organic matter in the soil as well as help control thatch. Top dressing materials include soil, sand, or an organic fertilizer. This should be done in March or April.
7. **FERTILIZING** - Fertilizing should occur at least three times per year, best is five times per year. Application rates for fertilizers are approx. 7-8 Lbs per 1,000 sq. ft.
 - ✦ Apply a 16-16-16 fertilizer in the spring (March/April).
 - ✦ Apply a 21-7-14 fertilizer one month later and based on the vitality and color of the lawn, apply a 21-7-14 fertilizer every month during the growing season (April thru September).
 - ✦ Apply one application of a fall & winter fertilizer (12-10-10) or (10-20-20) in October or November. Time this application at about the last mowing of the season.
 - ✦ A good way to remember when to fertilize is to do it around the following 5 holidays:
Easter, Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day and Halloween.
8. **MOWING** - Mow at regular intervals and change the mowing pattern with each mowing (i.e. now North/South one time, East/West the next). Mow more frequently in spring and fall. Keep turf longer in summer, never taking more than 1/3 off or 3/4" at a time.
9. **WATERING** - Two good soaks a week to a depth of 6" - 8" with approximately 1/2" of water each will provide the best results (light sprinkling on a more frequent basis will encourage surface root growth). Irrigating lawns in the morning or before sunrise is best, but if that is not possible, time it for after the sun has gone down.
10. **WEEDING** - If weeds are a problem, apply a broad spectrum herbicide containing 2-4D.