

WAGNERS CARE CARD

LAWN CARE

Whether you view your lawn as a matter of pride or as something to keep your feet from getting muddy when it rains, a healthy lawn will give you the results you want. Minimize your efforts and maximize your results by matching mowing, fertilizing, and watering to the grass's needs, your quality goals and time available. Keep the grass healthy and you will reduce the time needed to rid it of insects, diseases, and weeds.



BASIC REQUIREMENTS

Water Already established lawns generally need 1 inch of water each week. If your footprints remain in the lawn, the color turns a dull bluish-gray, or the leaves start to roll, it is time to water the lawn. Water thoroughly, but less frequently to encourage deep roots for drought tolerance.



CARE & MAINTENANCE

Mowing Never mow wet grass or mow closer than 1½". The height of the grass is a critical issue in keeping grass healthy and weeds at bay. Allowing the grass to grow up to 2" encourages the roots to grow down, giving the grass more staying power during times of drought. Taller grasses also help shade and cool the roots, and they reduce evaporation of moisture from the soil. For best results, vary the height of your mower according to the seasons. Set the mower lower in the spring when periodic rains and cooler temps prevail. Gradually raise it to the top height (2-3") by July when the heat sets in. Keep the mower at this height until the last mow of the season. Then, lower the height to 1"-1 ½". The blades will cut the growing tips of the grass encouraging basal branching for next spring's growth. Some mowing tips:

Keep the mower blade sharp. The most common cause of brown lawns is mowing with a dull blade.

Cut only ¼" of the length off the grass at one mowing. If you cut more than that, you over-stress the plants, leaving them more susceptible to pests, drought, and disease.

Leave only ¼" long clippings. Such small pieces will decompose and return valuable nutrients to the soil. Leave ~~brown~~ clippings, though and they tend to lodge above the soil, creating a layer of thatch that can impede water penetration, and increase disease and insect problems. Today's mulching mowers do a fine job of chopping clippings into small pieces, and blowing them into the soil for faster decomposition.



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Weed Control Your best defense is a thick, healthy turf, which will actually crowd out the weeds. If weeds do emerge, treat by either pulling the roots out by hand or using a chemical herbicide.

Follow mixing and use directions carefully on each package, keeping in mind herbicides are most effective when the air temperature is over 70°F. There are many types and brands that do different things.

- All-purpose, or nonselective, herbicides kill everything that they come into contact with, weed or plant (Ex. Round-up, Finale).
- There are other mixtures that target certain types of plants and do not harm others, such as lawn weed killer that does not harm grasses but kills broadleaf plants like dandelions (Ex. Weed-B-Gon, Weed-n-Feed).
- There are also those that only attack members of the grass family (Ex. Grass-B-Gon, Crabicide). Selective grass herbicides will not be effective on broadleaf weeds. Typical situations where they are useful include grass-infested groundcover or mixed landscape beds.
- Pre-emergence herbicides prevent weed seeds from sprouting (Preen). Crabgrass can be controlled with a pre-emergent treatment. To control crabgrass apply your pre-emergent in early spring before the crabgrass seed sprouts (which is when the surface soil temperatures reach 55°F for 3 consecutive days or more).
- Applying herbicides can be done with a tank sprayer or ready-to-use hose-end dispenser. On a larger scale apply granular fertilizer/broadleaf herbicide formulas with a broadcast spreader.



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TIPS & TRICKS

Other Problems Some common lawn problems can be addressed with proper care. Poorly growing or thin grass can be a sign of soil compaction or the wrong type of grass for a particular area. Compaction can be dealt with by aerating in the spring and fall and then overseeding with a mixture of grass seed formulated for northern climates, shade, or heavy traffic areas. Tall fescue, perennial rye, red fescue and Kentucky bluegrass are all suitable for northern lawns, since each germinates at different times to establish or patch a lawn.



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