

Mowing

Mowing height is key to keeping your lawn vigorous and lush. Too much removal can lead to problems, while too little can result in poor quality turf.

- Mow often, generally removing no more than 1/3 of the grass leaf in a single mowing.
- The optimum cutting height is 2 ½ to 3 inches. Repeated scalping of the turf weakens the root system.
- Change your mowing pattern frequently: for example vertical, horizontal, diagonal one-way, box pattern etc.
- Avoid bagging and leave your clippings on the lawn, unless they are excessively heavy.
- Mow when your lawn is dry, and be sure that your mower blades are sharp.

Watering

Normal rainfall in southern Alberta doesn't provide enough moisture during the growing season. Without watering, grass will go dormant and turn brown. To keep your lawn green, supplemental irrigation has to be supplied.

- Watch for indicators that your lawn needs water, such as foot prints that still appear after a half-hour or more, while on a well watered lawn foot-prints will completely disappear within minutes.
- Grass in need of water will have a grey-blue cast to it, rather than a blue-green or green color,
- Maximum of one inch of water a week is usually adequate for an established lawn. This water comes from either rain or applied water, providing it is applied evenly and saturates the underlying soil to a depth of 4 to 6 inches.
- Infrequent and deep watering is preferred to frequent and shallow watering because the roots will only grow as deeply as its most frequently available water supply. Deeply rooted grass will better survive drought and hot weather that rapidly dries out the upper soil layer.
- Trees and turf can compete for water under. Avoid planting turf under the drip line of a tree; rather use that area for perennial ground-covers, flower beds or mulch beds.

Weed Control

An ounce of prevention... A thick vigorous lawn which results from top quality turf, good watering and a fertilizer program is the best prevention against weed invasion. A dense stand of turf can compete successfully with weed seedlings for light and nutrition.

- Be sure to properly identify weeds prior to attempting to control.
- Control weeds by hand pulling, raking, mowing to prevent seed formation and / or application of selective herbicides.
- Early spring or fall treatments usually provide the best conditions for weed control.
- Mowing or watering should be delayed for several days after a chemical application to allow thorough penetration.

Thatch Control

Thatch is a layer of partially decomposed organic matter that builds up in between the lawn and soil surface and is a common problem in mature lawns.

To minimize thatch development:

- Frequent mowing, avoiding over-watering and over-fertilizing.
- Mechanical removal with a dethatching machine should be done gradually. Machines can be rented or you can hire a professional lawn care Company.

Aerification

This is the mechanical removal of soil cores.

Some indications that you need to aerate are:

- Ground is hard and compacted
- Weeds such as prostrate knotweed and clover are present.
- Water does not penetrate when you irrigate.

Aerating or coring can

- Help with heavy traffic areas such as pathways or sport fields.
- Also reduce thatch
- Be most beneficial when penetration is 2 to 3 inches deep and when 20 to 40 holes are punched per square foot.
- Aerification should be done in the fall, (September), or in the spring (April) when the turf is actively growing.

Fertilizing

The three main nutrients required by turfgrass are Nitrogen, Phosphorous and Potassium.

- Nitrogen (N) promotes dark green colour, leaf and blade development and density of the turf.
- Phosphorous (P) is important for root development
- Potassium (K) contributes to the plants vigor and promotes wear and drought tolerance.

What to use

- A slow release fertilizer such as Pro Turf 25-3-10 offers a reduced chance of burning your lawn. They also result in controlled growth and are better for the environment as there is no leaching.

When to use

Mid May	25-3-10
Mid July	25-3-10
Mid September	25-3-20

How to Apply

- It is best to make to passes of the lawn in different directions at a half rate each. Always ensure the spreader is properly adjusted to avoid striping or uneven colour.
- Follow your fertilizers on bag instructions for accurate application rates.
- Commercial lawn care Companies are also a convenient option.

Diseases

Lawn diseases can be difficult to identify and are often confused with other non-disease problems such as poor growing conditions, damage from fertilizer burn, dog urine or road salt. Some of the diseases that may occasionally affect your lawn include powdery mildew, necrotic ring spot, dollar spot, leaf spot and rust. Good mowing and watering practices, as well as balanced fertilization, with adequate potassium levels and not too much nitrogen, help in preventing lawn diseases. Removing thatch and increasing air flow near the surface are common cultural practices for controlling turfgrass diseases.

Fairy Rings

Fairy rings are circular or semicircular patches of dead grass with an inner green ring.

- Usually appear in lawns 5 to 15 years old and can be caused by a number of different fungi.
- The fungus feeds on the thatch and the ring grows outward. The fungus is not toxic to the grass, but it prevents water from penetrating into the grass root area causing the grass to die and allowing that area to become infested with weeds.

To remove a fairy ring...

- Repeated spiking with a garden fork (just outside the dead ring)
- Soaking with soapy water and frequent watering to increase moisture can slow the ring's development.
- Reseed or re-sod the dead areas.