

LAWN MAINTENANCE

Dethatching

The first step to spring lawn maintenance is called Dethatching, which is a process of removing debris and leaves that have settled into the lawn by raking it. Dethatching is a great way to revitalize the lawn and to stimulate growth. It is not necessary every year but it should be done if the thatch layer is greater than 1/2 inch or if it has been many years since the last dethatching. Dethatching can be accomplished by placing a special blade on your mower and setting the mower height to medium, which will also clip the grass a little shorter. The use of a bagger on your mower will make this process easier, but if you do not have a bagger the debris can be raked up after mowing.

Fertilizer

The next step for lawn maintenance is to apply a step one fertilizer to your yard that contains high amounts of nitrogen. Nitrogen helps establish the roots of your lawn and it helps the grass to grow and stay green. Typically the step one fertilizer that is applied will also contain a crabgrass pre-emergent which will help to keep your lawn weed free. The fertilizer should be applied in March or April depending on the weather and it should be watered in to activate the product. If you plan to do any seeding in the spring you should not apply this product.

Step two fertilizer should be applied in May or June. Step two fertilizers typically contain broadleaf weed control in addition to fertilizer. This fertilizer should be applied in the morning to ensure it sticks to the grass but it should not be watered in. It may be necessary to follow up with spot liquid broadleaf treatments to rid the lawn of dandelions and other weeds.

There are a few additional optional steps that may be applied in mid-May. The first is to apply season long grub control. Applying grub control can help to prevent unsightly dead patches in the lawn. The second optional treatment is an anti-fungal application. Hot, humid, and wet conditions often cause fungal outbreaks which may cause your turf to turn yellow or brown and die quickly. Preventative applications can help to reduce or eliminate these problems and is less than repair costs.

Step three fertilizer should be applied in late July. This fertilizer should be a low nitrogen fertilizer so it does not "burn" or brown your lawn during the hot summer months.

Step four fertilizer, a standard turf food, should be applied in September and should be watered in to get the best results. A fertilizer with broadleaf control could also be applied at this time of year instead of step four if your lawn is still having problems with broadleaf weeds.

Finally in November, step 5 winterizer fertilizer may be applied once the temperatures fall to 40 degrees. Step five fertilizer will feed the roots of the lawn and ensure a healthy start for spring.

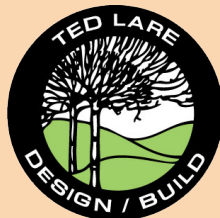
Mowing

In the spring your lawn should be mowed to a height of 2 to 2.5 inches. The shorter mowing height allows air, precipitation, and fertilizer to reach the roots of your lawn easier. During the summer months your lawn should be mowed to a height of 3 to 4 inches to sustain a healthy looking lawn. If your lawn is not irrigated or you do not water during the hottest part of the summer keep your lawn at a height off 4" to prevent browning. If the lawn is irrigated the grass can be mown to a height of 3 inches or less to let air into the crown of the plants. In September as the temperatures cool off, you can shorten mowing heights to 3".

Seeding

Grass seed can be applied anytime during the growing season. Seed can even be applied after the first snow—it will lay dormant until Spring and then germinate. Germination will occur once the temperature has reached 50 degrees or higher. Daily watering should occur until the seed has completely germinated. Do not apply high nitrogen fertilizers during the seeding period.

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