



Basic Lawn Care

To have a lawn that you can be proud of you have to follow cycle of operations based around five main items. Mowing, Feeding, Watering, Weed Control, General Cultivation

Mowing: Do not cut your grass too short. If you cut it so short that the brown bases are showing through, instead of foliage, then you are cutting it too short. Little and often is the best advice. Leave some grass foliage on the plants to allow them to regenerate.

Feeding: Because you are regularly cutting off the food supply of the grass plants - the leaves - then you have to help it by supplementary feeding. Spring and early summer are important - much more than autumn.

Watering: Only water when the lawn really needs it and not as a routine. It does little harm for the plant to suffer a little bit of drought and will soon recover from a little bit of browning. However, don't let it dry out too much and for long periods. Grasses are surface rooting plants, and if the soil in the top few inches dries right out, then some grasses can die leaving the way clear for drought tolerant weeds to grow.

Weed Control: Do it before it is too late! If you use a combined weed and feed in the spring and early summer that should take care of most weeds. Use a small spray gun to control other local outbreaks as soon as you see them. If you 'scalp' the lawn when mowing, and weaken the grasses, then weeds will soon invade.

General Cultivation: Bear in mind that normal use of a lawn, leads to surface compaction. Even consistent heavy watering can cause compaction. The areas at the edge of tree foliage canopies are especially prone to compaction, as the rain fall off hits the ground quite heavily. Aeration, combined with top-dressing is the answer, and is vital for the first class law.

Spring lawn care and maintenance.

What you do in the spring by way of lawn care, will determine how well your lawn will cope with the wear and tear of day to day use, and also it's ability to withstand drought or even water. The first task in the spring once conditions allow is to carry out the first cut. However long the grass, do not be tempted to mow the lawn too close. Set your mower to cut off about 1 in (25mm) of grass, no more. Subsequent cuts can be carried out from April onwards - preferably on a weekly basis, and lowering the cutting height of the lawn mower at every cut, until the desired height of grass is attained. Aim for grass around 1in (2.5cm) in height with normal use lawns. Leave a little longer under trees.

Weeds and Moss

Once cutting is carried out on a regular basis, you will be able to ascertain whether or not you have a moss or a weed problem that needs to be treated. April is a good month in which to carry out treatment, just as everything starts into vigorous growth. If you don't have weeds or moss in your lawn, then DON'T use a weed killer or moss killer!

Any areas of rough grass can be dug out at this time of year and bare patches in the lawn can now be over-sown - providing the cause is firstly diagnosed. Use a general grass seed, unless you have a lawn that was sown with a fine mix.

Feeding the Lawn in spring

April is a good time to start feeding your lawn. A fine day, with damp soil under the lawn will be ideal. Feeding can then be carried on right through until the hot weather starts.

Spiking

If your lawn has not been spiked and has hard compacted areas through regular use, children, or dogs, it would be a good time to carry out a little spiking of the lawn whilst still damp from the winter rains. This will help the drainage and allow air to get down to the roots of the grass to help vigorous growth.



Autumn Lawn Care and Maintenance.

Autumn lawn care jobs include, keeping worm casts under control, Moss-kill, Scarifying, Aerating, Over-seeding, General repairs

If your lawn has looked slightly yellow and generally sickly, you can feed it at this time of year. If you do, then it must be an **autumn** lawn feed. The feed used in spring and summer is not suitable, for it will have too great a Nitrogen content. This will lead to over-lush growth, which is not desirable at this time of year. It will weaken the grass and leave it prone to all sorts of turf diseases. You can actually care for your lawn too much at this time!

Worms - and their worm casts - on the lawn, are a pest especially in autumn. The type of worms that make worm casts in the grass, are not good aerators of soil, and they do not help drainage! So just keep brushing off the worm casts as they appear.

If there is moss, then apply a moss-killer to kill the moss that is there. However, it will return unless you also find out the basic cause of the moss!

Two weeks after you have used the moss-kill, the lawn will be ready to scarify. You can do this with a rake. One of the main reasons for scarifying is to get rid of the moss you have just killed, and also to rid your lawn of thatch. Once the scarifying has been carried out, then aeration follows on. This is another important part of autumn lawn care, best carried out whilst the soil is damp as this will make the task less back-breaking.

Aeration can be carried out by using a garden fork or a mechanical spiking/aeration machine. Alternatively, purchase a hollow-tyre fork. The aeration will leave you with a lawn full of holes, which will then need to be filled. Use a mixture of soil, sand and peat, that will keep these new 'pores' free draining, helping future rain to get down to the roots and also the all-important air down into the soil. It will also make the lawn less prone to future compaction. If this is all carried out before the onset of the 'nasty' part of autumn, then seeding of thin patches can also take place. (Once we are into winter proper, and then forget any ideas of seeding.)

Weeds in the Lawn

Lawn weed killers are special in that the chemical ingredient will only kill the weeds without harming the grass, other weed killers will tend to kill both so use only those specified for lawn weeds. Granular weed killers often have lawn feed incorporated - the popular Lawn Weed & Feed types. Liquid lawn weed killers are quick in action, and are best applied with a watering can with a fine rose. Spot Treatment can be carried out with ready-to-use Lawn weed guns particularly good on Dandelions, Plantains and Thistles.



White Clover



Self-heal



The Greater Plantain



Ribwort - Narrow leaved Plantain



Creeping Buttercup



Common Lawn Daisy



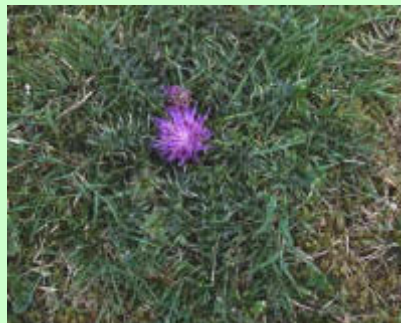
Dandelion



Dock Leaves



Birds foot Trefoil



Dwarf Thistle

Lawn Weed and Feed + Moss killer

[NPK: 8-0-3]

Greens the grass and kills most broad-leaved weeds and moss. Contains quick, intermediate and slow acting ingredients for steady growth. Apply 3 days after and 4 days before mowing on a still day when grass is dry but soil is moist. Do not use during drought freezing conditions, or when, rain is imminent. If no rain falls within 48 hours, water in with a hose or watering can.

Apply 2 oz / sq yd [70g per sq metre]

Spring and summer

[NPK: 11-5-5]

Spring and summer lawn fertilisers are high in nitrogen to promote quick growth. This very safe to use product is designed for all lawn types of all sizes. It will give your lawn that lush look. It is made as a minigran for easy application by hand or spreader.

Application rate 1oz sq yd 3 -5gms sq m



Autumn Lawn Food

[NPK: 3:10:5]

Autumn lawn fertilisers. Low in nitrogen, higher in phosphate (to strengthen roots) and potash. Promotes healthy root system to give a good start the following spring and increase root resistance during the summer. Apply when grass is dry but soil is moist.

Apply 1.5 oz / sq yd. Water in if no rain after 24 hours

Lawn Sand

[NPK 5-0-0] + Ferrous Sulphate

Lawn sand is made up from ferrous sulphate, ammonium sulphate and fine sand and commonly used to control many types of lawn weeds as well as control and prevent moss. When applied to the lawn the lawn sand 'settles' on the broad leaves and fibrous mass of moss and scorches them so they are destroyed. Because grass blades are fine with little horizontal surface area the lawn sand slides off and falls between the grass blades and onto the soil / thatch layer. This means that the grass blades are not scorched by the effects of the lawn sand.

Generally applied in spring or early summer it also acts as a first feed as when lawn sand reaches the soil it stimulates grass shoot growth and also helps to 'green' the lawn.

After applications do not cut the lawn for 3-4 days which allows the treatment can start to work. Avoid putting cuttings from the first mower cut on the compost contain higher than normal levels of chemicals