



Insider Secrets From Lawn Care Pros

**4 (well 5) Great Tips
For a Nicer Lawn than your Neighbor**



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1 – Mowing

One of the best ways to improve the health and look of your lawn is by creating good mowing habits. When the grass is cut, the growing points of the leaf are cut and branch out to become thicker and denser. It is very similar to working out at the gym. As you tear apart the muscle during your workout, they heal and become stronger. So every time you cut your lawn properly, it becomes stronger. Follow the tips below, and you will be surprised at how quick your lawn responds.

- **Mower should be in great working order** – The following guidelines become less important if you are just damaging the leaf blades. The cutting blade needs to be sharp and spinning at full rpms. Keep the mower clean and follow the maintenance schedule.
- **Cut at the proper height** – The rule of thumb is to never cut more than 1/3 of the leaf. So, for starters, never allow the grass to grow too long. The mower deck can be adjusted, so do it seasonally. During the growing months in the spring and fall, the deck can be lowered, while the summer months raise it as high as it will go. If you have any doubt about the proper height, than raise it up.
- **Vary your cutting pattern** – Tire ruts will be built up over time if you continually drive over the same spots. There will also be dead spots in the areas where you turn the wheels too many times, weeds won't even grow there. You can avoid this by cutting a different direction every week.
- **Leave the bag in the shed** – There are valuable nutrients in the tips of the blade that get broken back down into the soil, especially if you fertilize (which you should). If cut at the proper height with a good running mower, than all of the clippings will be finely cut and break down, back into the roots.

Don't forget to read this: These four tips will show you results, guaranteed. Get into a good, weekly routine with a raised, sharp blade. Vary your path and leave the clippings in the yard. Weed whack all the edges right away **and blow away all the clippings**. Even during the summer months, cut the lawn weekly to keep the weeds down. Cut the lawn when it is dry, usually later in the afternoon is the best. Also, keep the lawn clean from toys, tools, and any natural debris like leaves and twigs (and dog poop).



2 – Watering

Most lawns require at least 1 inch of water per week. A rain sensor can help track the amount of rainfall in a given week. Of course, a severe rain storm may provide over an inch of water in a couple hours, but the majority of this water will run off the lawn. Your lawn will need to absorb 1 inch of water. Running your system a few minutes at a time and just misting the lawn is not recommended. This will shorten the root system because the water is on the surface. A healthy and deep root system is what we are trying to achieve. If below the soil is healthy, than the top of the soil will be healthy and have the strength to withstand droughts or diseases when they occur. If your lawn can absorb it, one watering a week for 1 inch is better than every day at 1/7 of an inch of water.



Water in the morning before dawn, about 1/2 inch of water every 3 days

It will be cooler in the morning and give the water time to absorb into the soil before evaporating. Also, the soil will dry off throughout the day. It is important to have a dry lawn over night to prevent disease.

Too much water can lead to fungus, which is no real danger to your lawn, mostly cosmetic. Too little water can lead to a browning lawn, which again, is mostly cosmetic. Your lawn can actually survive without water for almost 8 weeks. It will brown, but will not die. The key is to develop your lawn and root system so it is strong enough to handle these types of events when they do happen.



3 – Fertilizer program

A fertilizer program is critical to creating a strong and healthy lawn. A good program will not only give the grass a nice green leaf, but also strengthen and deepen the root system that will help tolerate drought and disease. Weed and insect control should be part of the program to protect the lawn. Always use a season specific fertilizer and follow the label exactly. Scotts is very common and they have made it simple to follow for the homeowner. We buy our products through John Deere Landscapes and it is a Lesco product. Also, the Scotts program is a 4 step program. We have an additional application and also suggest getting lime applications down.

- This is our **Great Care Program** -

Round 1 - Crabgrass Control with Fertilizer – Dimension 0.15% + fertilizer. Provides 'pre-emergence' control of crabgrass and can also provide 'early post emergence' control of crabgrass during early stages.

Round 2 - Turf fertilizer – Nutrite 20-0-5 w/ 3% Fe. Slow release fertilizer that provides gradual and consistent nutrient release, including iron that provides deep green color without excessive top growth.

Round 3 - Grub control and fertilizer – 17-0-3 3% Fe with MALLET – Lambda. Professional grade, slow release fertilizer that controls insects ABOVE and BELOW the ground.

Round 4 - Turf Fertilizer – Nutrite 20-0-5 w/ 3% Fe. Slow release fertilizer that provides gradual and consistent nutrient release, including iron that provides deep green color without excessive top growth.

Round 5 - Turf fertilizer with Lime trace minerals – 18-0-6 powered by AMP-XC. Premium fertilizer blended with protein hydrolysates and humic acids to increase a plants ability to absorb macronutrients.

Round 6 - Winterizer - Nutrite 21-0-21. Applied late in the season and designed to help lawns store more food for winter survival, also encourages rapid growth and rooting in the spring.

Lime Applications – Applied with first or second application to help maintain the pH level in your lawn. Helps balance acidic New England lawns.

Weed control, extra tip

A great way to separate your lawn from your neighbors is apply **liquid weed control**.



CAUTION: CAUTION: **Read the label**. The two weed controls that will be side by side at the store, are selective and non-selective. Non-selective weed control will kill everything it touches, 'Round-up' being the most common. It is used for sidewalks, driveways and even beds if you are careful with the spray. Selective weed control will target certain weeds (there will be a list on the label) and be safe for the lawn. A selective, lawn friendly weed control is what you want. Buy a one or two gallon spray jug, and label it with a permanent marker. Mix a batch and go apply. Selective weed control can damage the lawn if not used properly, so go carefully until you start seeing results. Spraying weeds will be an ongoing process, so get into a good habit.

4 – Seasonal lawn care tips

Spring De-thatching - The lawn should be kept clean of leaves and debris constantly, and usually the spring is a good time to get it very clean. The lawn should be thatched or raked fairly aggressively to remove the thatch layer and any other lingering sticks and leaves that are embedded into the soil from the winter. Thatching the lawn will also help remove any snow mold or dead spots caused by the winter. All clippings and debris should be cleaned up and taken off the lawn.

The timing of this process is important. The soil needs to dry out for a week or two after the snow melts, but really early in the spring with the first mowing. It absolutely has to be done prior to the crabgrass control to prevent damaging the pre-emergent layer that is created from that treatment.

Fall Aeration – One of the most beneficial things you can do for your lawn is to do a core aeration. This process removes cork sized plugs from the ground and leaves them lying on the grass. It allows air, water and nutrients to get down into the soil and creates a great environment for the roots to expand. The aeration should be done after the last heat wave and about a month prior to the lawn freezing. A good window is typically Labor Day to Halloween.

We typically do not recommend aerating in the spring time. Here in New England, the weather is unpredictable and if the weather heats up to quick in the year, than crabgrass will fill in the holes. If you aerate the lawn once a year, do it in the fall. If you aerate twice, once in the fall and once very early in the spring. The lawn needs enough time to heal before the ground temperature reaches 58 degrees and crabgrass begins to sprout.

Seeding – The fall is also a great time to get some seed down. The seed needs to make some connection with the soil, so just throwing some seed down on will result in minimal germination. If you would like to seed after doing the aeration, that's great, and will lead the plug holes filling with seed and eventually grass. If you need a more aggressive approach for real thin areas, a slice seeder or a power rake will rough up the surface and give you the best germination. Once the seed is down, lightly hand rake it in to mix it with the loose soil. Treat with starter fertilizer and lime. And then, WATER, WATER, WATER. The cool and wet nights will help with this, but make sure the seed doesn't dry out and become dusty. If that happens, may be a lot of work for nothing.

Spring seeding can be done, but same as the aeration, needs to be done early. Once the sun really warms up, it will be difficult to keep the area wet. Avoid summer seeding because of this reason. Young seedlings will probably not germinate, and if they do, will not be strong enough to last.

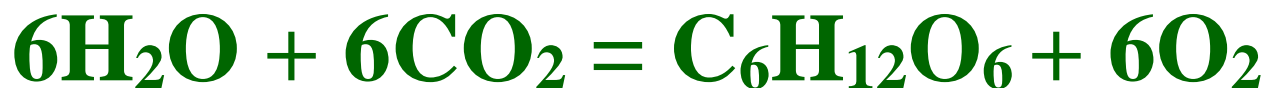


Summary – Sometimes too much info will prevent any action, so here is a nice summary.

- Thatch early in the spring with the first cut, followed by crabgrass control and lime
- Follow the mowing guidelines
- Fertilize every 6 weeks thereafter with a season specific treatment
- Spot spray weeds with a selective weed control
- Aerate and seed in the fall.
- Keep the lawn clean throughout the year

Closing thoughts – All lawns grow within slightly different environments, even right next door to each other. Ultimately, the healthiest and greenest lawns will have water in the morning with plenty of shade, followed up with several hours of sun in the afternoon. This environment allows the lawn to relax and drink what it needs in the morning, and then get the sun that it needs to complete the photosynthesis process. The afternoon sun will dry off any remaining moisture before nightfall and prevent fungus from building up. All of the proper techniques will not change whether you have a good or bad environment. Some lawns will grow naturally with minimal help, and others will be a struggle to make it look average. Stay patient with the progress and be consistent. If you do have a troubled lawn or a tough environment, extra care needs to be paid.

Photosynthesis is the process by which plants use energy from sunlight to produce sugar, which converts into fuel (adenosine triphosphate) used by all living things. The conversion of sunlight into energy is associated with chlorophyll. This process uses water and sunlight to release oxygen.



(6 molecules of water + 6 molecules of carbon dioxide = one molecule of sugar plus 6 molecules of oxygen)

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