

## Care for Your Lawn

Few things in a home landscape generate as much pride as the lawn. Caring for a lawn is an easier task for some than others. Preparation and maintenance are keys to success. Minimize your turfgrass anxiety by taking note of these lawn care basics.

### Preparation

1. Before undertaking any lawn chores, clean the lawn. Rake up leaves and debris.
2. Level high or low spots in the lawn by doing the following:
  - \*Fill holes with topsoil and add grass seed.
  - \*Remove bumps by cutting an X in the raised area with a garden spade. Peel the sod back, remove as much soil as necessary from underneath and lay the sod back in place.
3. Do a soil test. Follow the directions carefully and add the amendments recommended by the test results.
4. Check for soil compaction and aerate if necessary. Soil that's too compacted prevents water and oxygen from reaching plant roots. Compacted soil also causes runoff and erosion.
5. Check for excessive thatch and remove it if it is too thick. A thatch layer that's too thick (over 1/2") promotes a shallow root system that can't survive dry weather.
6. Whether you are repairing a bare spot, seeding a new lawn or reseeding an existing one, grow the right kind of grass for your growing zone. Follow the fertilizing and irrigation schedule that applies to your turfgrass variety.  
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### Maintenance

1. When you water, water deeply in the early morning. Deep watering reaches the roots, where healthy grass comes from.
2. Mow grass to the proper height with a mower with a sharp blade. Never cut off more than one third of the blade when mowing. Grass needs the surface area of the blade to sustain itself. Removal of too much of the blade creates a good environment for disease.
3. Prune trees and shrubs properly to allow sun and air circulation. More sunshine and air promotes growth and discourages disease.
4. Inspect your lawn regularly for disease, insects and weeds. Learn to recognize and treat problems quickly and appropriately.
5. Take care of your lawn care equipment, both before and after the growing season.
6. Choose and apply fertilizer and pesticides wisely. Knowing the correct product to apply at the proper time is the key to your perfect lawn.

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