



Feeding And Maintaining An Attractive Lawn

While most homeowners love the sight of a nice green lawn, many assume that such a lawn requires hours of labor in the yard or hundreds of dollars in lawn maintenance services. Keep in mind though, that you are not trying to maintain a golf course, and that by following some basic guidelines you can easily maintain a healthy, vigorous, attractive lawn.

Maintaining your lawn can be a fairly easy job. You need only perform three simple tasks. In order of importance, they are: water, mow, and feed. If you simply water and mow regularly you can have a viable lawn, and if you feed regularly, it will remain green. However, maintenance of the lawn becomes more involved when the quality of the lawn becomes important.

Watering

Watering should be a regular part of your lawn maintenance, especially during hot weather. Watering requirements depend on many variables, including the type of grass, the type of soil (i.e., sand vs. clay), and the amount of natural rainfall you receive. In general, water your lawn thoroughly with about one inch of water when it begins to wilt in the spring. This deep watering encourages deeper rooting, making your lawn less susceptible to root-pruning insects and diseases. During the summer, much of the root system deteriorates. Therefore, summer waterings should be light and frequent. Never apply water faster than the soil can absorb it.

Gardening Interests

C A R E S H E E T

The best time to water your lawn is early morning when evaporation losses are low and leaves dry quickly. Evening watering does not allow time for the leaves to dry and makes your lawn more susceptible to diseases.

Mowing

Mowing is an essential practice for proper lawn care. Mowing discourages weeds and makes the lawn more resistant to pests. The frequency of mowing depends on how fast the grass grows. Ideally, grass should be cut often enough so that no more than 1/3 of the total grass height is removed at one time. Keep mower blades sharp to avoid ripping the grass and to reduce the chance of disease.

In general, you should leave the clippings where they fall because they return nutrients to the soil. This can reduce nitrogen and potassium requirements by up to 30 percent. Properly mowed lawns should not have increased thatch or clumps of clippings. The use of organic fertilizers helps to prevent the build-up of thatch.

Fertilizing

Lawns almost always need fertilizer because of the artificial conditions under which grass is forced to grow. Crowded and close together, the plants starve unless fed. The three major nutrients most likely to be lacking in grass are nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. The trace nutrient iron is also essential for optimum growth.

| | All Natural | Natural Based |
|--------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Early Spring | Weed Preventer Plus 9-0-0* | Espoma Lawn Food 18-0-3 |
| Late Spring | Espoma Organic 7-2-2 (optional) | Espoma Lawn Food 18-0-3 |
| Early Fall | Weed Preventer Plus 9-0-0* | Espoma Lawn Food 18-0-3 |
| Late Fall | Espoma Organic 7-2-2 | Espoma Lawn Food 18-0-3 |

* Use Espoma Organic 7-2-2 when feeding.

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