

PLUMLINE LAWN TIPS

Many homeowners are unhappy with the condition of their lawns and are frustrated at their inability to improve the situation. Many times, industry products used as “solutions” simply intensify the very problem they are trying to solve.

A healthy attractive lawn occurs when all the tools and products are used together properly!

MAJOR LAWN PROBLEMS

1. Soil is compacted. Over 2/3rds of American lawns are growing on compacted soil.
2. Soil is almost dead. Most lawns are being grown in soil with few earthworms, less than 1% humus and with little microbiotic activity.
3. Lawn -care practices that are harmful. Many homeowners mow their grass too short, fertilize and water improperly and never aerate or add organic material to the turf.
4. Grass is tired.

What is tired grass?

Because of stress caused by improper lawn care practices, most existing lawns lack vigor. Lawns that are over 10 years old lack the benefits of recent technological developments in improved grass seed varietiestherefore, even the best of lawn care products do little to improve these “tired” lawns.

Rx For Tired Lawns.....

1. Improve the soil:

Soil compaction is a lawn’s enemy! Even if the lawn isn’t routinely walked on, years and years of walking behind a lawn mower – or worse, driving a mower – every ten days or so has caused most lawns to be compacted.

Conventionally, we take care of the grass, when we really should be taking care of the soil! We need to do what golf course and athletic field turf managers have been doing for decades: make **core aeration** a regular part of the lawn maintenance program.

Once we have given the stressed soil some relief, we can consider top dressing with organic material such as mushroom manure.

2. Introduce improved, modern grass seed varieties:

Much of the grass growing in residential lawns is outmoded by today’s standards. The key is to upgrade the lawn by introducing mixtures of the newer, improved turf-grass types.

New seed can be introduced in several ways. Over-seeding, partial renovation, or complete renovation. The choice of procedures depends on the condition of the existing lawn.

Even a total renovation is relatively simple these days (not the dreaded undertaking of the past).

Kill existing grass and weeds with Roundup.

Core aerate the entire area (2-3 passes are recommended: once per 1-2 years).

Over-seed at 10 lbs. /1000 sq. ft.

Water

**Selecting the “right” seed mixture is crucial. Since the goal is to upgrade, use only mixtures of 100% improved, highly rated varieties. PLUMLINE SPECIAL MIX is ideal.

Quick Rx: Aerate lawn every two years, toss thin layer mushroom manure over lawn, overseed with *Plumline Special Seed Mix*.

3. Mow and Water properly:

Mow HIGH and mow OFTEN.

Blow clippings away from planting beds. (less weeding later)!

Mulching mower owners – mow regularly as needed. If the grass isn't too long, mulching mowers effectively chop grass clippings into very small particles that fall down to the soil between grass blades where they quickly decay and return organic material back to the soil.

Non-mulching mower owners – leave clippings and make it a regular practice to mow a little more often. Less time and energy will be expended on this occasional extra mowing than would have been wasted fooling with bag after bag of clippings! If any small clumps of clippings remain, work them into the grass with a leaf rake turned up side down or with a broom. Do NOT allow the clumps to remain on top of the grass.

For established turf, deep infrequent watering is better than frequent light sprinkling because it encourages deep, healthy root growth. Grass with deep root structure tolerates drought much better. Furthermore, because Japanese beetles prefer to lay their eggs in lawns that are continually moist, allowing the soil to dry out a bit between waterings discourages development of their grubs. Water early in the day (as early as 4 am) so the grass is dry by dark. Night-time watering promotes fungus growth.

Quick Rx: Mow high, mow more often, practice deep, infrequent watering practices early in day.

NEW LAWN INSTALLATIONS

Here again, choose the best seed blend.

*****Quick Rx:** Our *Plumline Seed Mix* is specially formulated by owner Bill Tribou. It is a mixture of 2 blue and 3 perennial rye varieties. This exceptional combination is best suited for our local weather conditions and soils. Apply at a rate of 8-10 lbs. per 1000 sq. ft. (or 4-5lbs for overseeding). Avoid mixtures containing *annual* ryegrass and too much fine fescue for sunny areas.

When fertilizing new lawns, use only a slow release product that has been designated as a starter fertilizer. The less expensive types of agricultural grade fertilizer produce a one-shot burst of leaf growth and short-lived color. This quick “fix” of nitrogen stimulates leaf growth at the expense of the root system and the slower to germinate bluegrass.

We recommend that you apply only ½ of a slow release starter fertilizer with seed application. Apply the second ½ after the blue grass has had time to sprout. This is because the aggressive rye grasses have a tendency to dominate – especially if over-stimulated.

*****Quick Rx:** for new lawns: apply Weed & Feed after fourth mowing.