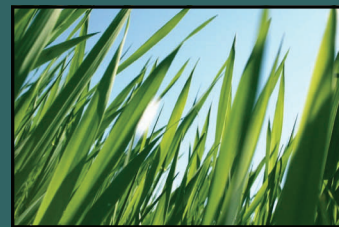


Grass: Quick Tips for Homeowners



WATERING

☐ Light, frequent watering is best. 1/5" daily between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm. Watering at this time will cool the plant and provide water when the plant needs it most.

(For further information see publication : E 09 Turf "Irrigation Practices to Preserve Water Quality")

MOWING

☐ 2 1/2" - 3" high. Never cut off more than 1/3 of the grass blade at one time.

Tall grass receives more sun; tolerates hot and dry conditions better; develops deeper roots; and shades out weeds.

(For further information see publication: E 13Turf "Mowing Lawn Turf")

WEED CONTROL

Spring: Apply pre-emergent around mid-April or as forsythia blooms for crabgrass control

May to early June: Spot treat with a post-emergent for broadleaf weed control

July and August: Do nothing

September to October: Post-emergent spot treating, hand pulling or digging can be done at this time

(For further information see publications: NCR 92 "Annual Grass and Perennial Weed Identification", E 02 Turf "Crabgrass Control in Home Lawns")

SEEDING

☐ Seed in early spring or between August 15 and September 15

☐ If you use a pre-emergent in the spring, you must wait until August- September to seed.

☐ When choosing seed, use brand name improved cultivars.

☐ Hydro-seeding and sodding can be done at anytime, but you should avoid extremely hot weather for a more vigorous lawn.

☐ Newly seeded lawns must be kept moist so seedlings do not dry out.

☐ Newly sodded lawns must be kept moist until roots are established.

☐ All lawns need a proper base. Six inches (6") of top soil should be applied on top of clay. Work in organic matter to break up clay and improve sand.

(For further information see publications: E 1401 "Site Preparation for Lawn Establishment", OC 172 "Grasses for

Michigan Lawns", OC 176 "Seeding a Lawn", OC 183 "Lawns and Shade")

FERTILIZING

☐ Leaving grass clippings in the lawn can reduce fertilizer use by eliminating one fertilizer application.

☐ Have your soil tested by your local Michigan State University Extension office to aid in the

selection of your fertilizer.

Decide on the amount of care you're going to give to your lawn. Do you want golf course quality for your lawn? Then you should fertilize:

(1) Memorial Day: with a slow release fertilizer

(2) Fourth of July: with a slow release fertilizer

(3) Labor Day: with a slow release fertilizer

(4) Halloween: with a dormant, high nitrogen fertilizer

OR:

Do you have a low maintenance lawn (you just want "green")? If so, you should fertilize in May and September with a slow release or organic fertilizer.

(For further information see publications: OC 182 "Selecting a Turf Fertilization Program", NCR 356 "Fertilizing Garden and Landscape Plants and Lawn", OC 401 "Slow Release Fertilizers", E 896 "NPK Fertilizers")

CORE AERATION

Should be done on compacted or clay soils in spring and/or fall.

SUNLIGHT REQUIREMENTS

Keep in mind that shade tolerant means a minimum of 4 hours of sunlight per day.

Shade tolerant grasses are mixes of bluegrass and fine fescue.

Sod is a combination of bluegrasses and it needs full sunlight (greater than 6 hours of sunlight per day).

Groundcovers are a good alternative for shady areas.

MULCHING

Mulching leaves into your lawn with a mower that will pulverize the leaves is a method of reducing the leaves and adding nutrients to the grass.

(For further information see publication: OC 377 "Mulching Tree Leaves into Lawns")

DISEASES AND PESTS

Correct cultural care (see "Watering", "Mowing", "Weed Control", "Fertilizing") can reduce many pest problems.

Diseases and Pests can be serious problems. Call or visit your local Michigan State University Extension office for specific bulletins and controls for insects, diseases, weeds, and critter damage.

DROUGHT

Grass will become dormant in hot summer weather without water. Either water daily (1/5" to 1/4") or not at all. When cooler weather and rain develops, grass growth will resume.

THATCH

Thatch is not caused from grass clippings. It is caused by dead grass stems that are sloughed off and accumulate between the soil and the growing grass blades. Excessive fertilization and watering may contribute to thatch.

(For further information see publication: OC 190 "Thatch in Lawns")



Would you like additional information?

Additional information is available on-line. Please see [MSU Extension-Oakland County's publications](#) as well as [MSU Extension's Bulletin Office](#) on campus.

Contact our [Plant & Pest Hotline](#) (248/858-0902) for assistance with plant identification, pests and diseases, weeds, trees and shrubs, lawn, flowers, fruits, vegetables, grasses and groundcovers, native plants, plant propagation, and many other gardening topics.