



LAWN CARE

Manage Water Where it Falls



HEALTHY GRASS

IS A MATTER OF FOLLOWING

5 SIMPLE STEPS



Transform your lawn into a stormwater sponge. Healthy lawns help absorb more rain, which reduces water pollution and the amount of water that can get into sewers. Healthy grass develops thick root systems that also help minimize soil erosion.



1

MOW

MOW OFTEN. The best way to mow is often. Follow the one-third rule. For a thriving lawn, never cut away more than one-third of the grass blade in any one mowing. This keeps the grass at optimal height for root development. Stronger and deeper roots mean fewer pests. Consider helping the environment and your fitness level by using a push mower if you can.

RECYCLE YOUR GRASS CLIPPINGS. Never put grass clippings in a plastic bag and send them off to the dump or sweep into the street. Grass clippings are valuable organic matter, full of nitrogen and other nutrients. As long as you mow often enough to remove no more than one third of the grass blade, the easiest thing to do is just to leave clippings on the lawn. The pieces break down quickly and reduce the amount of fertilizer you have to use by as much as 25 percent. Research has proven that the clippings don't cause thatch to build up.

FALL LAWN CARE.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q5_9nBLNAvg

2

AERATE

Aeration pulls cores of soil and grass from your lawn and deposits them on the surface. Aeration loosens compact soil, improves drainage, encourages deep root growth, reduces weeds, increases fertilizer uptake and prevents thatch. Cool season lawns should be aerated in the spring or fall, on an every-other-year basis.

HOW TO AERATE

You can purchase or rent home aerator equipment at a business specializing in lawn and garden care. If you have a sprinkler system at your house, tag them before you start the aeration process to avoid damage. Space aeration holes 2 to 6 inches apart, and go 1 to 6 inches deep.

Don't feel up to the task? Call your local landscape company or garden center.

"Research shows that properly fertilized lawns contribute less water runoff and nutrient loss than many fields planted with agronomic crops. Research also shows that even a season without fertilization can reduce grass stand density, increasing water runoff by as much as 70%."

— *UW-Extension*



3

TOP-DRESS

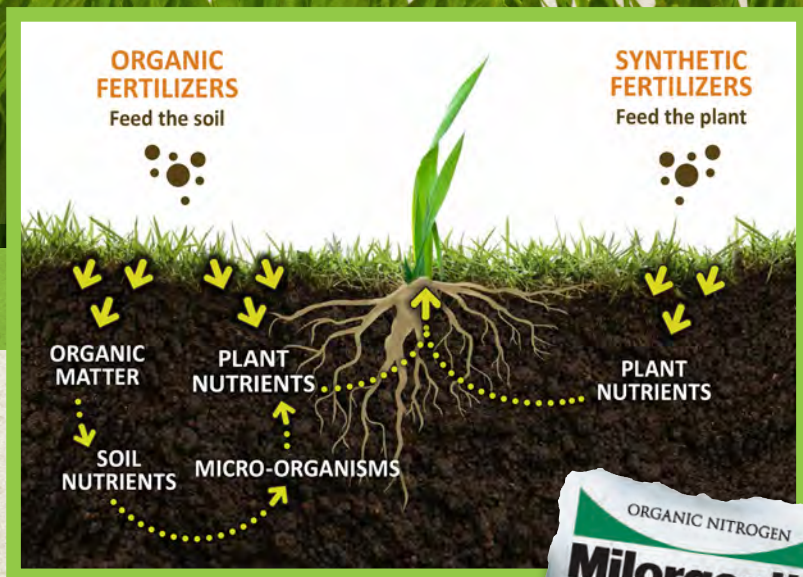
Once the lawn is aerated, it is best to top-dress with high-quality compost, topsoil, or manure. Topdressing is the practice of adding a thin layer of soil over your lawn. Regular topdressing improves drainage and drought resistance, evens out holes in your lawn from winter freeze-thaw cycles, fills bare spots, helps alleviate compaction, and helps build organic matter in the soil profile.

HOW TO TOP-DRESS

- **Shovel** out a small mound of soil onto your lawn. Work a few square feet at a time.
- **Place** the topdressing using the back of a metal garden rake. Keep working the area until your grass blades begin to peek through.
- **Spread** the topdressing no deeper than a ¼" to ½" thick over your lawn.
- **Top-dress** in spring or early fall (every other year.)

HOW OFTEN TO TOP-DRESS

Regular, uniform top-dressing does not need to be an annual tradition. Keep in mind that you're adding soil, which over time will raise your grade. Don't go overboard! Plan several light applications if you have a troublesome lawn. Every light application of topdressing brushed into aeration holes can improve the soil without raising the grade.



4

FERTILIZE

Select a slow-release fertilizer, like Milorganite®, to provide a consistent nitrogen source for grass between fertilizer applications.

Slow-release fertilizer not only feeds your lawn, but it will also stimulate beneficial soil microorganisms and improve the structure of the soil.

- **Apply** one 36 lb. bag of Milorganite® per 2,500 square feet to your lawn around Memorial Day, 4th of July, Labor Day and Thanksgiving. For other fertilizers, follow the instructions on the bag.
- **Recycle** your grass clippings. When mowing your lawn, return the grass clippings to your lawn. Grass clippings contribute approximately 1 lb. of nitrogen per 1,000 square feet each year to your lawn. **Think of it as free fertilizer!**



5

OVERSEED

HAVE A THIN LAWN?

If you have a thin lawn, thicken it up by overseeding. Overseeding is the planting of grass seed directly into existing grass, without tearing up the grass or the soil. It's an easy way to fill in bare spots that weeds would otherwise take over, improve the density of your grass, establish improved grass varieties and enhance your lawn's color.



SEEDING BARE SPOTS?

If you have small dead patches in your lawn and want to fill those in, follow these steps:

- **Gently** rake up and remove dead grass.
- **Add** topsoil to the bare area.
- **Fill** in the holes with grass seed mixed with Milorganite® or other fertilizer by hand.
- **Work** the seed into the soil by gently raking the area a second time.
- **Water** the seed in.



OVERSEEDING YOUR ENTIRE LAWN

- **Choose the right time of year.** Early fall, around September, is the best time to overseed. If early fall is not an option, the next best time is spring.
- **When overseeding mow your lawn short.** Mowing your lawn short helps prevent grass seeds from getting trapped in tall grass and allows more sunlight for new seedlings.
- **Rake up the thatch and grass clippings.** Thatch is a layer of mostly dead organic matter on the top of the soil. A heavy layer of thatch will keep seeds from germinating because seeds need to be in direct contact with the soil in order to germinate.
- **Aerate.** Core aeration increases contact between seeds and soil, improving germination and helping establish the new grass more quickly.
- **Spread grass seed evenly over the entire lawn.** Use the amount specified on the seed package, based on the size of your lawn. To seed, you can either use a rotary spreader, a drop spreader, a hand spreader, or spread by hand. Mixing grass seed with Milorganite® or other fertilizer is an effective way to spread seed accurately, and provides the seedlings with essential nutrients for optimal growth. Mix 4 parts Milorganite® with 1 part seed by weight.
- **Water lawn completely, immediately after overseeding.** Continue to water the lawn frequently for at least the first several weeks to ensure proper germination. Once the grass seed is firmly established, water the lawn for longer periods less frequently.



MORE DETAILS & REFERENCE MATERIALS

- **Aerating Basics**

<http://www.milorganite.com/Lawn-Care/Lawn-Care-Basics/Aerating.aspx>

- **Fertilizer Application Rates**

<http://www.milorganite.com/Lawn-Care/Lawn-Care-Tools/Application-Rates.aspx>

- **Spring Lawn Renewal**

<http://www.milorganite.com/Lawn-Care/Lawn-Care-Tools/Lawn-Renewal.aspx>

- **5 Steps to a Healthy Lawn**

<http://www.milorganite.com/Lawn-Care/Lawn-Care-Tools/5-Steps-to-a-Healthy-Lawn.aspx>

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