myhomeTURF
MY LAWN. MY LIFESTYLE.

Lawn care & maintenance

MOWING YOUR LAWN 3
LAWN WATERING DO'S & DON'TS 5
LAWN CARE DURING DROUGHT 6
USING GREY WATER ON YOUR LAWN 9
FERTILISING YOUR LAWN 11
TOP-DRESSING YOUR LAWN 15
LAWN AERATION – WHY & WHEN? 17
DETHATCHING YOUR LAWN 19
REMOVING LAWN WEEDS 21
ORGANIC LAWN CARE 23

Tropical Lawns

ESSENTIAL LAWN GUIDE © 2020 TurfBreed Pty Ltd • Version: 30_11_2020

FACT SHEET 1 OF 2

Mowing your lawn

Tropical Lawns

Managing your mowing is a key part of maintaining a healthy, lush green lawn.

The rule of thumb is to only cut one third of the leaf per mow – no more. Many Australians tend to mow too low which can cause problems such as scalping which stresses your lawn.

The lawn variety, your conditions and the season determines how high or low you mow.

The best practice guide for mowing **my**home**TURF** varieties:

BUFFALO	Prestige	Cut to 3.5cm-4.5cm in sun or light shade, or 5cm-6cm in shade.
		Mow every 7-10 days in warmer months, and every 3-6 weeks in colder months.
	Sapphire	Cut to 2cm-5cm in sun or light shade, or 5cm-7cm in heavier shade
		Mow every 5-10 days in warmer months, and every 3-6 weeks in colder months.
	Palmetto	Cut to 2cm-5cm in sun or light shade, or 5cm-7cm in shade.
		Mow every 7-10 days in warmer months, and every 3-6 weeks in colder months.
ZOYSIA	Empire	Cut to 2cm-5cm in sun, or 5cm-7cm in shade – lower cuts will resemble a Couch lawn, higher cuts will resemble a Fescue lawn with longer leaf blades.
		Mow every 2 weeks in warmer months, and every 3-8 weeks in colder months.
	Nara	Cut to 2cm-5cm in sun, or 5cm-7cm in shade – lower cuts will resemble a Couch lawn, higher cuts will resemble a Fescue lawn with longer leaf blades.
		Mow every 2 weeks in warmer months, and every 3-8 weeks in colder months.
	Augusta	Cut to 2cm-5cm in sun, or 5cm-7cm in shade – lower cuts will resemble a Couch lawn, higher cuts will resemble a Fescue lawn with longer leaf blades.
		Mow every 2 weeks in warmer months, and every 3-8 weeks in colder months.
KIKUYU	Kenda	Cut to 2.5cm-5cm every 7-10 days in the warmer months, and, at the same height, every 3-6 weeks in cold months.
COUCH	OZTUFF	Cut to 1.8cm-2.5cm every 7-21 days in the warmer months, depending on the frequency of fertiliser. In winter raise your cutting height by 1cm and mow to maintain your lawn at the desired height.
	Stadium Sports	Cut to 2cm-4cm every 7-21 days in the warmer months, depending on the frequency of fertiliser. In winter raise your cutting height by 1cm and mow to maintain your lawn at the desired height.

© 2020 TurfBreed Pty Ltd • Version: 30_11_2020

FACT SHEET 2 OF 2

Mowing your lawn

Tips to maintaining your mower

- Maintain sharp blades
- Clean your mower after use
- Maintain regular servicing
- Makes sure your air filter does not become blocked with grass
- Ensure your fuel is FRESH

Remember with either a petrol or electric mower always use genuine lawn mower spare parts to safeguard your warranty and to ensure safety standards and performance levels are optimised.

Please note our article is intended as a general guide and **my**home**TURF** recommends you seek professional assistance from a qualified repairer if you suspect your lawn mower is in need of repairs.

© 2020 TurfBreed Pty Ltd • Version: 30_11_2020

FACT SHEET 1 OF 1

Lawn watering do's and don'ts

Tropical Lawns

How do you know when to water? It's easy, water your grass when you see these three signs:

- Curled up leaf blades in the evening (wilting blades during the highest heat of midday sun is not a good indicator – always check the condition of the leaves in the evening).
- Blue-gray colour instead of green.
- Footprints or lawn mower tire tracks remain visible long after being made.

But remember none of the above signs indicate your lawn is about to die.

Your turf has the ability to turn brown and go dormant but stay alive for three to four weeks during periods of long dry.

If you live in an area with water restrictions, it is a good idea to let your grass go dormant between watering.

However, if you go for three to four-weeks without rain, water the grass long enough to moisten the top 12cm of soil - this keeps the grass alive.

Water at the right time

- The best time to water your lawn is early in the morning before it gets hot.
- Most of the water will be absorbed to the roots, and the grass blades will dry quickly, preventing disease problems.
- The rule to remember is infrequent and deep watering is preferable for your lawn because the roots will only grow as deep as the most frequently available water supply.

Don't mow your grass during drought

- Mowed grass loses lots of moisture through cut blades and turns brown if you don't water it.
- During hot, dry summers don't cut the grass until it rains two days in a row.
- Cut at the highest recommended height for your grass. Taller grass, shades and cools the ground, reducing moisture loss.
- In a drought, taller grass always stays greener longer than shorter grass.

Other factors to consider

- A healthy lawn needs good soil conditioning, such as aeration and fertiliser to survive.
- If your lawn struggles, despite your best efforts, test your soil or ask your local garden supplier for advice.
- A wide variety of grass species can be grown for lawns. Choose the type best suited for your region's weather conditions. Some grass types are more drought tolerant, thanks to their deeper root systems.

© 2020 TurfBreed Pty Ltd • Version: 30_11_2020

FACT SHEET 1 OF 3

Lawn care during drought

Many lawns across Australia will at some stage suffer from drought or water restrictions – but how do you tell if your lawn is dormant or dead?

In Australia, most lawns are warm season grasses meaning they are very hardy and need very little water to survive.

Warm season grasses include, Buffalo, Kikuyu, Couch and Zoysias. In times of heat stress and water shortage these grasses enter a state of dormancy.

Dormant or dead?

When temperatures are high, turf naturally enters a state of dormancy where it starts to shut down tissue growth to prevent moisture loss.

So, dormancy is the natural survival mechanism that allows your turf to stay alive longer when under stress.

Generally, most warm season grasses will sit dormant until the next watering or rainfall.

How do you tell if your lawn is dormant?

Most importantly – the difference between dead and dormant turf is found by looking at the lawn's crown at the base of the leaves.

The crown generally sits at the soil line and is also where the shoot and root section of the grass meet.

The turf's crown is a highly active growing point that pushes the stem (the leaf blades) upward.

If the lawn's crown is white to off white, then there is a high chance that the plant is still alive (see image)

A dead lawn appears dry, brown and brittle across the plant from the leaves down to the base of the crown.

FACT SHEET 2 OF 3

Lawn care during drought

Tropical Lawns

General survival tips for your lawn during a drought

Looking for other ways in which you can help your lawn survive the drought? Here are additional tips that you can do to help your lawn survive.

1. Remove all organic litter

Remove all dead organic material for your lawn such as thatch, leaves, bark and dry tree branches.

2. Aerate

Aerating is a vital part of keeping your lawn healthy during prolonged dry conditions and drought.

Aerating, with either a pitchfork or aerating machine, improves the passageway for water and nutrients to reach the lawn's roots.

*For more information refer to **Aeration Fact Sheet.***

3. Reduce lawn traffic

Try and stay off your lawn as it is already under stress from lack of water.

The best way to ensure your lawn recovers from lack of water is by not adding any stress through wear and tear.

4. Water deeply less frequently

Your lawn shows signs of needing water when the leaf blades start to wilt.

By watering your lawn thoroughly and deeply you encourage the development of strong root growth in your lawn.

Lawn stays moist and hydrated for longer when watered deeply.

If you are short of water only water parts of the lawn that are drying out and under stress.

It is advised to water your lawn early in the morning between 6am and 10am.

Evening watering can induce humidity to occur overnight resulting in fungal problems.

If water restrictions occur in your region, make sure you adhere to the watering requirements based on your restriction level – check with your local water authority for more details.

*For more information refer to **Watering Fact Sheet.***

FACT SHEET 3 OF 3

Lawn care during drought

5. Grey water

Grey Water is a very viable alternate to watering your lawn during summer or more importantly water restrictions.

Connecting a hose to your grey water outlet and letting it seep into the lawn is an ideal method of watering.

Grey Water consists of wastewater from your showers, baths, spas, hand basins, laundry tubs, washing machines, dishwashers, and kitchen sinks.

Grey Water does not include the water from your toilet.

*For more information refer to **Grey Water Fact Sheet.***

6. Apply a wetting agent

Apply a wetting agent to your lawn to improve water absorption.

After long periods of dry, lawns become dehydrated and the soil struggles to absorb water.

A wetting agent helps break down the soil's surface tension and allow water to soak through.

7. Mowing

The rule of thumb when mowing is to not cut your lawn more than 1/3 of the grass blade.

*For more information refer to **Mowing Fact Sheet.***

FACT SHEET 1 OF 2

Using grey water on your lawn

Tropical Lawns

Grey Water is a very viable alternative to watering your lawn during summer or more importantly water restrictions.

Your Grey Water consists of wastewater from your showers, baths, spas, hand basins, laundry tubs, washing machines, dishwashers, and kitchen sinks.

Grey Water DOES NOT include the water from your toilet.

Instead of letting your Grey Water go down the drain into the sewer system, it can be captured easily by a bucket and used in certain circumstances outside your home – such as on your lawn.

Before you start to use your Grey Water, it is important to note that different states have different rules regarding the use of Grey and Recycled Water - be sure to check these first.

If using washing machine water, avoid water containing fabric softener. It is recommended that you use detergents that are low in phosphorous. Always check detergent's label before use.

Benefits of using Grey Water:

- A source of irrigation water year-round.
- A relatively easy and safe source of water to access and use on your lawn.
- A good source of important nutrients for many lawns and plants.

How do I divert my Grey Water?

You can divert Grey Water in three ways:

1. Manual bucketing

Manual bucketing is the cheapest way of using Grey Water.

It means collecting the Grey Water in a bucket from your washing machine or shower and using it to water your lawn.

You don't need permission to do this, but don't store or keep the collected Grey Water for more than one day to avoid the risk of spills and bad odours.

To prevent Grey Water running into neighbouring properties, don't use this method when it's raining or when the soil is already saturated.

FACT SHEET 2 OF 2

Using grey water on your lawn

2. Grey Water diversion

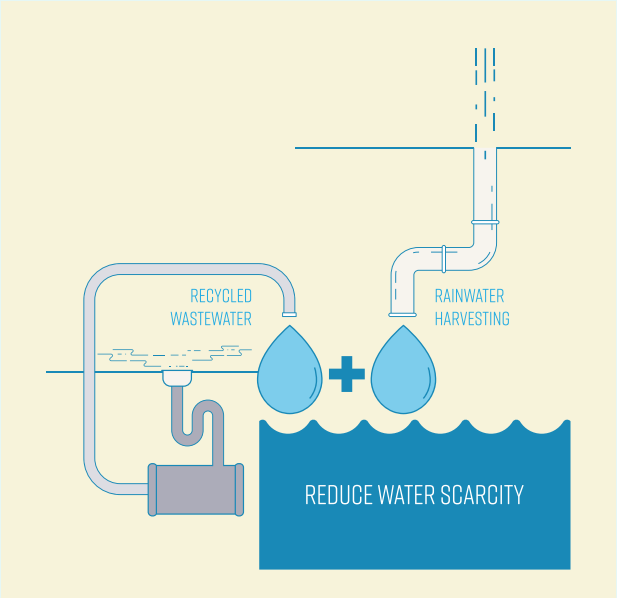
A Grey Water diversion device is a simple system that diverts Grey Water to a small holding tank and then to an irrigation system that is below the soil surface.

These systems should be self-draining so that Grey Water isn't stored for more than a day.

The simple system also has a valve to make it is easy to divert your Grey Water directly to the sewer when it is raining or when the soil is saturated.

There are many such systems on the market so shop around for the system that best suits your needs. Consider cost, durability, ease of use, ease of installation and maintenance.

Many Councils have suggestion on their website about different Grey Water diversion devices.



3. Grey Water treatment system

Grey Water treatment systems mean you can use all the Grey Water your home generates regardless of the weather.

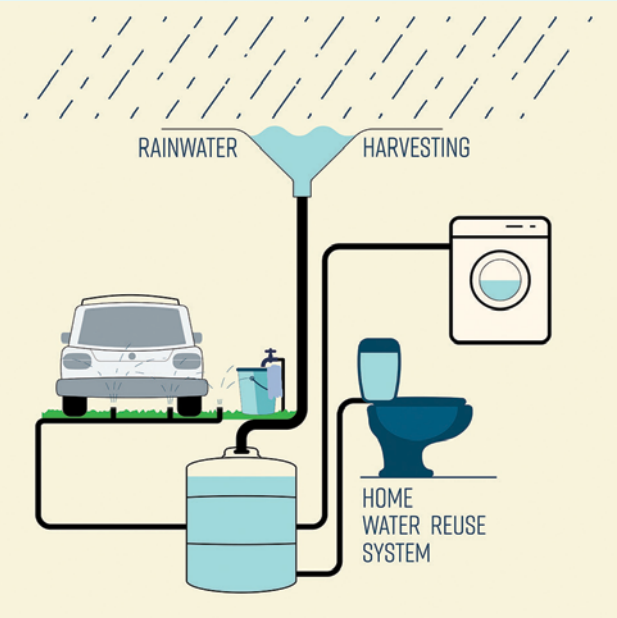
After the Grey Water has been treated it is clean enough to be stored.

Treated Grey Water should be almost colourless and it should not have a bad odour however it is not safe to drink.

Installing a treated Grey Water system is obviously a huge undertaking but does have ongoing benefits which outway the cost.

You can use treated Grey Water to:

- Flush toilets.
- Wash your clothes.
- Water your lawn and garden using a hose, spray or drip irrigation.



When choosing a treatment system, it must be certified under an Australian Standard. Your local council will then approve the use of a system for your home.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has a list of certified treatment systems to help you choose the right one.

If you are operating a business at home and generating more than 5000 litres a day of wastewater, you need an apply to your relevant state EPA to operate a wastewater treatment system.

Finally, keep an eye on how your lawn reacts when you start using Grey Water, and consult your local garden centre if you notice any changes.

FACT SHEET 1 OF 4

Fertilising your lawn

Tropical Lawns

Trying to decide which fertiliser to use on your lawn, and when, can be a daunting task.

To make it easier for you, **my**home**TURF** has put together a simple guide explaining what to do and the different types of lawn fertilisers.

Fertilising is one of the best things you can do to prepare your lawn for every season as it makes it strong and healthy and ready for any conditions that lie ahead.

Knowing if your soil is lacking in any nutrients is also very important and helps you select a suitable lawn fertiliser.

myhome**TURF** first suggests doing a pH Soil Test to test your lawn's soil quality.

What is a lawn soil test and why do it before I fertilise?

A pH test will reveal your lawn's soil level of acidity represented ranging between 0 and 14.

It's important to understand the quality of your soil so that you can make better-informed decisions when it comes to choosing the right fertiliser.

A pH value over 7 indicates you have alkaline soil and your turf needs phosphorus (P) and potentially iron (Fe).

A pH level that falls below 7 indicates your soil is acidic and needs potassium (K) and potentially magnesium (Mn).

By understanding your soil quality and pH results, you'll be able to choose the right fertiliser for your lawn according to the nutrients required.

Realistically, the closer you can get your soil to that magic 7 mark, the better the soil quality meaning a better plant and a better lawn to enjoy.

A good place to start when looking at improving your lawn is a soil test.

There are a few ways to test your soil pH.

- The first is a simple test kit available from your local garden centre.
  - Soil pH kits are a very simple, cheap and effective way to get an idea of what you are dealing with.
  - Soil pH kits come with easy-to-follow instructions that provide you a result that can be compared to the supplied colour chart, giving you an idea as to what pH your soil is.
  - When using these soil pH test kits, it is always an advantage to take the soil from your lawn around 10cm deep in several spots and mix them together then test. Why? This will give you an average across your lawn.
  - The biggest mistake people make is testing only one spot of their lawn, how can you be sure that where you tested is the same as the other side of the yard?

- The second is by commissioning a commercial soil test. Commercial soil tests aren't that expensive. For a scientific look at your lawn, you can expect to pay around $150 and upwards depending on the data you require.
  - Collect your own lawn soil sample by randomly pulling 10 to 12 individual soil samples from your lawn to a depth of about 10cm. Make sure there is no vegetation or excessive root mass in the soil sample.
  - Mix your lawn's soil samples and place about a cup of the mix into a plastic bag with your name and details attached and ask your local garden centre to have it tested.

The soil test results will provide important information that will help determine what type of lawn fertiliser you should use and how often.

© 2020 TurfBreed Pty Ltd • Version: 30_11_2020

FACT SHEET 2 OF 4

Fertilising your lawn

Tropical Lawns

Choose the right fertiliser nutrients for your lawn

Each lawn fertiliser comes with three macro-nutrients: Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium.

Depending on the type of lawn and soil quality, it will require a fertiliser that has a certain blend of these three nutrients to thrive.

Nitrogen (N)

- Nitrogen is usually the highest percentage found in fertiliser
- If your grass is beginning to look yellow in some areas, it's likely to be Nitrogen-deficient
- Nitrogen has properties that improve the health of grass leaves and therefore helps your lawn appear greener, thicker and fresher

Potassium (K)

- Potassium is required to help your lawn's overall functions
- It is the key nutrient to strengthening cell walls and therefore makes your lawn more durable so to withstand extreme weather conditions

Phosphorus (P)

- Phosphorus is used for the healthy growth of your lawn's roots
- Only a small percentage is usually required

The ratio of Nitrogen, Phosphorus, and Potassium plays a part in determining the right fertiliser for your lawn.

*As mentioned above, conducting a **soil test** will point you in the right direction in choosing the right fertiliser.*

Preparing for fertilising

Before fertilising, and while waiting for your soil test to come back, aerate, and rake your lawn to remove leaves and other debris.

If you decide to mow, allow at least two days before fertilising.

Once you fertilise your lawn – wait at least a week before mowing and when you mow for the first time leave the catcher off (this is so the fertiliser remains on the lawn).

Always select a fertiliser that suits your type of lawn and the time of year when you are fertilising.

Best fertiliser results occur when feeding your lawn at least three times a year:

- early spring
- early summer
- mid to late autumn.

If you decide to feed your lawn once, it is best done during late spring or early summer.

Always read the fertiliser's directions before applying to your lawn and use a spreader (handheld or wheeled) to ensure even coverage.

Again, the best fertiliser for your lawn is one that contains the nutrients your soil needs – that's why doing a soil test can be very helpful.

Fertilisers are most often sold by a numbering system that can represent several nutrient ratios such as nitrogen (N), phosphorus (P), potassium (K), sulphur (S), Iron (Fe) and manganese (Mn).

***Before applying any fertiliser** be sure to find out from your local garden centre what sort of grass you have and if your soil is lacking in nutrients, so you purchase the correct type of fertiliser.*

© 2020 TurfBreed Pty Ltd • Version: 30_11_2020

FACT SHEET 3 OF 4

Fertilising your lawn

Tropical Lawns

Liquid fertiliser

Liquid fertilisers have the advantage of being able to be applied to both the ground or to the lawn foliage itself, also called foliar application.

Application of liquid fertiliser through the ground will result in the roots absorbing the nutrients whereas application to the plant allows the plant to absorb the fertilisers through the leaves and have the nutrients more readily available for immediate use.

Foliar application can allow you to make mid-season corrections to add vital nutrients to your lawn if it didn't get the correct mixture at the beginning of the season and needs a boost.

Another main benefit of a liquid lawn fertiliser is that it can be easily administered to the largest of lawns in a liquid form and absorbed, not only by the lawn foliage itself, but also by the surrounding soil.

This is of great value to lawn care and while liquid fertiliser is commonly more expensive it can be more effective!

Again, the best fertiliser for your lawn is one that contains the nutrients your soil needs.

One of the advantages of using a liquid lawn fertiliser is that you can easily mix in any other nutrients your lawn and soil needs.

Whether you mix concentrate in a litre sprayer (the less expensive option), or purchase a pre-mixed bottle that attaches to your garden hose, lawn liquid fertiliser is more versatile than granular because you can apply it to the ground or the leaf foliage.

Key features of liquid fertiliser:

- Uniform application
- Quick leaf foliage uptake when green-up is needed
- Seasonal application variances available
- Can blend with other liquid products
- Easy to apply

Slow release lawn granular fertiliser

Granular lawn fertilisers are dry fertilisers that are made into a pellet form, often blended to get the desired ratio of nutrients needed for your lawn.

Using a granular fertiliser method means you can control the exact amount of Nitrogen, Phosphorus, and Potassium that needs to be added to your lawn.

Most lawns respond well to a slow release granular fertiliser, which can be found at any local garden centre or at our partners LawnPride, and they feed the lawn for up to three months.

Using a slow release fertiliser on your lawn once, for example during autumn before the ground becomes too cold, means your lawn will cope through a tough, cold winter.

Application of a slow release lawn fertiliser should occur during:

- Late March or early April (when the weather is still warm)
- During spring (when the ground has warmed-up)

Key features of slow release lawn fertilisers:

- The nutrients slowly, continuously release
- All the fertiliser's nutrients are utilised following watering-in
- Use of low application rates (saves money)
- There is only a need to apply three times during the year (twice in spring and once in autumn)

Another benefit of a slow release lawn fertiliser is that a consistent level of growth and greening occurs across the life of the application with no spike in growth and no nutrient-run off.

It is important not to use cheap slow release lawn fertilisers as these products tend to initially release a lot of nutrients and dwindle-off quickly with nutrient delivery, resulting in an initial surge in growth which will not be maintained.

© 2020 TurfBreed Pty Ltd • Version: 30_11_2020

FACT SHEET 4 OF 4

Fertilising your lawn

Traditional lawn fertiliser

Traditional lawn fertiliser is often the cheapest lawn food choice but not necessarily the best.

Key features of traditional lawn fertilisers are that:

- They require high application rates
- They only supply your lawn with short-term feed
- They create a crystalline or powdered appearance
- A spike in growth and greening occurs (rapid initial response which tappers-off quickly)
- They require frequent applications

Traditional lawn fertilisers also tend to dump their nutrient load immediately after watering into the lawn which often leads to high nutrient run-off into waterways and drains.

Application rates for traditional fertilisers are every four to six weeks and rely on the lawn being able to absorb the nutrients as they move through the soil.

However frequent applications of traditional lawn fertiliser can have detrimental effects on the soil chemistry and therefore health.

Organic lawn fertilisers

A 'true' organic lawn fertiliser is one that has been certified as 100% organic – so be sure to have that guaranteed on the label when purchasing.

The simplest way to check that it is 100% organic is by looking for the Australian Organic Certified logo on the bottle or pack.

A recommended organic lawn fertiliser is a blend of both a natural (organic) and synthetic (manufactured) fertiliser.

Therefore, the use of an organic lawn food and soil improver combines the features of both a slow release fertiliser as well as natural ingredients such as seaweed, fish, manure and bio-stimulants.

Since organic lawn fertilisers are natural products it is hard to over-fertilise and in fact, they make your soil and plant health strong.

As organic lawn fertilisers can be more expensive than other fertilisers it is possible to make your own by composting manure – such as from cattle or chooks.

The best time to apply your organic lawn fertiliser in autumn is either late March or early April or during spring (when the ground has finally warmed-up).

You can also make another application of organic lawn fertiliser during winter – preferably late June.

Another form of organic fertiliser is liquid seaweed which offers a sustainable and large array of nutrients that can help your lawn. The trace elements found in organic seaweed fertilisers include magnesium, potassium, zinc, iron and nitrogen – all of which are beneficial to your lawn.

In summary:

Do:

- Use soil pH test results to choose the right fertiliser
- Spend time accurately measuring the size of your lawn
- Try organic fertiliser during the hot summer months
- Buy a quality fertiliser spreader that best fits your needs
- Accurately calibrate your spreader to make sure you apply the right amount
- Keep your spreader well maintained
- Keep records of what and how much you apply and when you apply it

Don't:

- Test your soil after you have fertilised
- Guess on how much fertiliser you need and what setting you use
- Apply fertiliser in hot, humid weather
- Apply fertiliser near water features, on hard surfaces or on frozen ground
- Use phosphorus unless your soil test indicates a deficiency
- Apply more than four times a year
- Bag your clippings

© 2020 TurfBreed Pty Ltd • Version: 30_11_2020

FACT SHEET 1 OF 2

Top-dressing your lawn

Tropical Lawns

Top dressing your lawn usually occurs at the beginning of spring when the soil is warming-up and the turf is coming out of dormancy.

Reasons for top-dressing lawns

There are two reasons to top dress lawns. The first is to level uneven lawns or indentations in the surface, and the second is to add nutrients as part of an overall lawn care routine.

If you are also going to fertilise your lawn, the recommendation is to fertilise a week or two before applying the top dressing, regardless of if you are repairing for unevenness or adding nutrients.

Fertilising prior to top dressing enhances the lawn's ability to push new growth through the top soil layer.

Top dressing also encourages running grasses to root in more quickly as they start their spring push, they can establish more quickly into the fresh soil.

© 2020 TurfBreed Pty Ltd • Version: 30_11_2020

FACT SHEET 2 OF 2

Top-dressing your lawn

Tropical Lawns

Top dressing lawns to add nutrients

There are many rich organic soil mixes now available which can be applied to lawns to not only add nutrients, but also organic matter.

Organic matter is what soil-borne friendly bacteria and micro-organisms need to feed on and thrive.

These soil mixtures add yet another source that, not only feeds the lawn itself but, feeds the soil which supports the entire lawn.

Top dressing with these organic soil mixtures is a great benefit to all lawns, and could easily be applied a couple of times a year as an added boost to your lawn care practices.

Top soil organic lawn mixtures only need to be applied sparingly.

The top soil mix is added to the lawn in small amounts and raked into the green leaf and thatch of the lawn. If applied correctly, the topsoil mixture should almost disappear into the green leaf altogether after watering.

Organic top-dressing mixtures should not be used to fill in any lawn indentations. This is because they have the potential to create water traps inside the original depression, as well as add organic matter in quantities which may be too rich for the lawn to handle.

Note if you have clay soils adding organic ***top dressing breaks down the soil particles*** *making it easier for the new lawn growth to push through.Also, you can use a top-dressing mix of 80/20 organic and non-organic add ins.*

Top dressing helps uneven lawns

Levelling uneven lawns is relatively easy, but it is important to do it correctly, using only small amounts of just topsoil in increments.

Only use soil from the property or sand, and never top-dress large depressions in the lawn, instead lift the lawn and add the soil underneath.

ALWAYS make sure you are purchasing a fresh reliable, weed-free source of top soil or organic mix that has not been sitting in the yard for too long.

Top soil can be purchased at many local garden centres.

© 2020 TurfBreed Pty Ltd • Version: 30_11_2020

FACT SHEET 1 OF 2

Lawn aeration – why and when?

Tropical Lawns

Aeration is an important part of maintaining a healthy lawn and allowing it to be porous enough for oxygen, water and nutrients to penetrate down to the root zone.

Aeration also helps prevent the build-up of thatching and encourages the deep rooting of your lawn therefore producing a strong more vigorous grass.

Should I be aerating my lawn?

It is easy to assess whether your lawn needs aerating – the following points will help you make the decision:

Your lawn needs aerating if:

- Your lawn gets heavy use from children and pets running around the yard.
- During prolonged dry conditions and drought.
- It was established as part of a new home – as often the topsoil of new lawn is stripped or buried, and the grass established within the subsoil has been compacted by construction traffic.
- It dries out very easily and has a spongy feel underfoot. This often is because your lawn has an extensive thatch problem. If the layer of thatch is greater than 1.5cm then aeration is recommended.
- If your lawn was newly established, it may have soil layering which is when finer textured soil – which comes with the new lawn – is layered over the existing coarser soil. This laying can disrupt airflow and drainage to the newly developed roots.

When is the best time to aerate?

The best time for aeration is during the growing season, when the grass can heal and fill in any open areas after soil plugs are removed.

Ideally, aerate the lawn with cool season grass in the early spring or fall and those with warm season grass in the late spring.

When experiencing prolonged dry conditions and drought, aeration is recommended. This will improve the passage for water and nutrients to reach the lawns roots when watering is limited.

© 2020 TurfBreed Pty Ltd • Version: 30_11_2020

FACT SHEET 2 OF 2

Lawn aeration – why and when?

Aerating tools

Two main aerating tools exist – a spike aerator and a plug aerator.

Spike aerator tools: this method is quite simple as you use a tool, such a garden fork or spikey shoes, to poke holes into the ground.

Plug aerator machines: this method involves removing a core, or plug, of grass and soil from the lawn. Plug aerators can be hired from your local garden centre but be sure to follow the directions provided by the store.

When choosing an aerating tool or machine select one that removes soil plugs approximately 5cm deep and 2cm in diameter apart.

How do I aerate my yard?

After reading the points above and you are convinced you need to aerate your lawn then here are some tips on how to do it as well as follow-up lawn care:

Before you start aerating – either with a tool or machine – make sure your lawn's soil is moist enough. It is advisable to aerate after rain or watering your lawn.

Most aerating machines only cover a small part of the soil surface per pass, so ensure your passes are all over the compacted areas of your lawn. Save energy and resources by leaving uncompacted areas alone.

Make sure you allow the excavated soil plugs to be dried up and then broken on your lawn to give a clean and uniform appearance. The plugs can be broken up by simply pounding them with a rake or running over

them with a mower. Be sure to sharpen your mower blades after breaking up the plugs.

After aerating be sure to continue basic lawn care maintenance such as fertilising, mowing and watering.

Important:

Remember – aeration is a beneficial practice towards achieving a beautiful lawn, but most people don't realise it or understand the process.

If your lawn is a candidate for aeration, make it an integral part of your lawn care regime. Your lawn will thank you for letting it breathe again.

FACT SHEET 1 OF 2

Dethatching your lawn

Tropical Lawns

While a necessary, natural and beneficial part of all lawns, thatching becomes a real problem when it increases to excessive amounts. This then has many detrimental effects on the lawn and must be dealt with effectively to remove the problem.

There are several methods used to de-thatch lawns and with a little understanding of each process - you should be able to choose the method best suited to your own lawn.

What is thatch?

Thatch is a layer of organic matter that accumulates on a lawn around the base of the grass plants. Thatch is a combination of living and dead plant matter including crowns, stolons, rhizomes, and roots. Grass clippings do not generally contribute to thatch buildup as they can be easily broken down by soil microorganisms.

Methods of removing thatch...

Low cut lawn mowing

This method of detaching is best suited only for warm-season grasses which have runners and is most suitable for the grasses which have underground runners called Rhizomes. This includes lawns such as Couch which can easily repair from the low cutting process.

Low cutting involves mowing at a very low height to remove the entire thatch layer. This can be done with one single mowing or may more easily be done with several passes being used - each time lowering the mowing height until all the thatch is removed.

This method can be very slow and dirty and will produce an enormous amount of waste matter which must be considered and planned for before work begins. Overall, it has no benefits over Vertimowing, is not suitable for cool-season grasses. For lawns mowed with a Cylinder Lawn Mower, a far greater result will be gained from Vertimowing.

© 2020 TurfBreed Pty Ltd • Version: 30_11_2020

FACT SHEET 2 OF 2

Dethatching your lawn

Lawn coring

Lawn coring is done with a lawn coring machine which is taken over a lawn's surface and punches out plugs of soil, thatch and grass, leaving hundreds or thousands of holes in the surface.

Lawn coring is primarily done for the purpose of increasing drainage and aeration of the lawn soil. However it also has the added benefit of removing some of the thatch layer of the lawn.

Lawn coring should only be used as a supplemental method of de-thatching, as it is not overly effective, and will have little effect on heavily thatched turfs.

The best use for lawn coring, as a method of de-thatching, is for cool-season grasses which have no runners to regenerate from and which make them unsuitable for other de-thatching methods.

Cool-season grasses will benefit greatly from lawn coring on a yearly basis, which will routinely aerate the soil as well as regularly remove and control thatch.

Vertimowing

Vertimowing really is the best method of de-thatching.

Special machines are taken over the lawns surface to remove the entire thatch layer, including most of the lawn. The lawn is then left to regenerate from its above ground and below ground runners.

Apart from being the overall best method of de-thatching, Vertimowing is really the only method which should be considered when our lawns are mowed with Cylinder Lawn Mowers. This is because it removes the most amount of thatch, and slightly levels the soil surface - both factors which will benefit the process of Cylinder Lawn Mowing.

The process of Vertimowing is a very dirty job which is highly laborious and produces a lot of waste material. For these reasons, it really is best to hire a professional contractor to do the work and to be assured the work is done properly in a single session.

© 2020 TurfBreed Pty Ltd • Version: 30_11_2020

FACT SHEET 1 OF 2

Removing lawn weeds

Tropical Lawns

The main step with weed control is to remove them from your lawn before they set seed.

However, if you need to use a herbicide (weed killer) for it to work more effectively the lawn needs to be growing vigorously and in good health.

If you have not fed the lawn in the past 6 – 8 weeks fertilise prior to applying your weed killer.

Fertiliser strengthens lawns by opening the leaf's pores allowing for better absorption of the herbicides.

You must wait at least 2-3 weeks after fertilising before applying the appropriate weed killer at the recommended dosages.

How to permanently remove weeds

Weeds are a nuisance, but they are just like plants and like to grow thick and rampant.

The best way to be rid of weeds is to create a lawn environment that is difficult for them to thrive within.

What attracts weeds in your lawn is low-mowed grass, compacted soil and water-deprived turf.

Fix these problems by maintaining a healthy lawn and you can say goodbye to weeds.

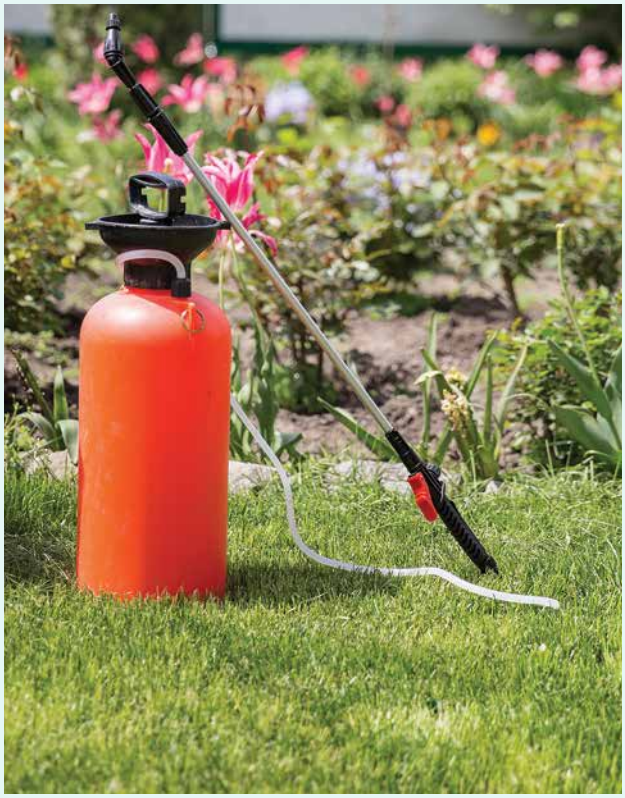
Can I kill the weeds without killing the grass?

Pre-emergent and post-emergent herbicides (weed killers) are designed to kill weeds but not the lawn. Both are made exclusively for weeds.

Post-emergent herbicides attack weeds after they have shown their ugly little heads. The 'post' part of this type of herbicide refers to the fact that it is used on already existing weeds and applied usually during spring.

Pre-emergent herbicides are used before you see signs of weeds usually during autumn or winter.

These herbicides will not affect your lawn if they are applied correctly, and you follow the directions.



© 2020 TurfBreed Pty Ltd • Version: 30_11_2020

myhomeTURF

FACT SHEET 2 OF 2

Removing lawn weeds

Tropical Lawns

Can I naturally remove weeds from my lawn?

Natural weed removal can be done but it does take time.

Spraying vinegar directly onto the weeds is a natural way to kill them. This method dries out the weed's leaves and kills what's above the ground.

Be sure to use vinegar that contains more than the standard 5% Acetic Acid. In order to buy a vinegar with 10% to 20% Acetic Acid, it is best to visit your local garden centre rather than the supermarket.

According to USDA research, using this natural spray enables you to kill 80% to 100% percent of weeds' top growth.

This natural weed control method works best for a few weeds spread throughout the lawn. You are advised to go for a safe, effective organic herbicide if you have a large spread of weeds on your lawn.

Easy steps to fix a lawn full of weeds

If your lawn is becoming dominated by weeds here are some easy steps to help keep them under control:

- Find out which weeds are most dominant on your lawn as treatments are made to target specific weeds. This enables you to purchase a specific product that kills those weeds.
- Ascertain what sort of stage the weed is in (before or after seed set) and choose an appropriate treatment for that stage.
- If it is springtime and you plan to kill the weeds before the growing season begins then your will require a pre-emergent herbicide. For established weeds buy a post-emergent herbicide.
- In order to kill the weeds effectively, follow the directions for both how much product to apply and when to use it.
- Ensure you maintain a proper lawn maintenance schedule to ensure you keep your lawn weed-free.
- During autumn or spring consider aerating your lawn if necessary
- Prior to winter give your lawn one last short mow and fertiliser treatment.

- During spring, start fresh with pre-emergent herbicides and be quick to hand pick any lingering weeds.
- During spring and summer, regularly mow your lawn and be careful not to remove more than a third of the grass at a time.

*For more information refer to **Common Lawn Weeds Fact Sheet.***

© 2020 TurfBreed Pty Ltd • Version: 30_11_2020

FACT SHEET 1 OF 4

Organic lawn care

Tropical Lawns

The goals of Organic Lawn Care

- Naturally reduce the infestation of weeds, pests and diseases
- Reduce fertiliser usage
- Use less water on your lawn
- Use less chemicals on your lawns - or to eliminate chemicals altogether
- Reduce maintenance from practices such as lawn mowing
- Use natural lawn care products
- Naturally cure any problems whenever they occur

The basics of Organic Lawn Care

These Organic Lawn Care basics are not cures to lawn problems, rather they are cultural management practices - which are the things you can do every day to keep your lawn in excellent health.

The ultimate aim of Organic Lawn Care is to provide your lawn with the greatest chance of both preventing, and naturally fighting off any problems, such as pests and diseases, with the least amount of intervention.

The correct lawn type is vital

The amount of maintenance a lawn-type requires is vitally important.

For example, Zoysia grass is a proven environmentally friendly lawn type, for its ability to naturally need less mowing, high pest and disease resistance, less prone to weeds, needing less water and only needing a fraction of the fertiliser compared to other lawns.

If Zoysia is not the right lawn for you, or your region - then carefully research which other lawn types require less lawn mowing, have less thatch build-up, require less water, and have a greater resistance to weeds and disease.

*Explore our **Quick Lawn Selection Guide** to help you make your variety choice.*

© 2020 TurfBreed Pty Ltd • Version: 30_11_2020

FACT SHEET 2 OF 4

Organic lawn care

Soil pH levels

Soil pH represents the levels of acidity and alkalinity in the lawn's soil.

Lawns will thrive and remain their healthiest when their soils are properly balanced.

However, major turf problems can occur when these levels are out of whack. So it's important to ensure your lawn's soil pH is correct.

A soil pH test kit is inexpensive to buy, and the test only takes a few minutes to determine your soil's pH levels.

Remedies to alter your lawn's soil pH levels can be easily applied once the problem is identified, it could be as easy as just a lack of a certain nutrient.

Alternatively, a full soil analysis can be done in a laboratory relatively cheaply these days. Ask for advice at your local garden centre.

Lawn mowing

It is best to mow your lawn higher as this reduces water usage, infestations of weeds, pest and disease, and will help to create a deeper root system making the grass more drought tolerant.

A very short lawn, and lawns which are masterpieces, are high in maintenance and require intensive lawn care practices to be kept in these unnatural conditions where they are often far too weak to defend for themselves against weeds, pests and diseases.

Lawn clippings from mowing are an excellent source of high-quality nutrients which can be recycled back into the lawn to feed the turf naturally once again.

10-minute lawn care

Organic Lawn Care principles are about allowing people to enjoy the walk around their lawn and garden – this sometimes may only take a quick, pleasant 10-minutes.

So, while you are out and about, look at pulling up a weed by hand when you see one, or pulling out a grass runner.

By doing this, you are maintaining your lawn with the tiniest of effort and without a second thought, and best of all there are no more big clean-ups.

The other great bonus of 10-minute lawn care is that by managing your lawn so easily and simply through removing little problems when they first occur, your lawn never gets out of control with weeds and other issues which may require chemical treatments to fix.

© 2020 TurfBreed Pty Ltd • Version: 30_11_2020

FACT SHEET 3 OF 4

Organic lawn care

Tropical Lawns

Controlling thatch

Thatch is important and natural to all lawns as it helps protect the lawn from damage and shelters the soil from heat and water evaporation. However, too much thatch is a real problem.

Excess thatch provides perfect breeding grounds for lawn disease and pests, as well as increasing mowing requirements and leading to poor lawn health and other problems.

Lawn thatch can be controlled mildly with the lawn coring process, or most efficiently with vertimowing, AKA scarifying.

Or you could also cut the lawn down lower than normal once a year in the spring to help easily control thatch. De-thatch when it is required, and you'll have a lawn with far less problems.

Regular de-thatching will eliminate the extra thatch layer which is often the perfect breeding ground for many lawn diseases.

By eliminating thatch, you can greatly reduce lawn disease outbreaks.

Lawn aeration

Lawn aeration is the process of de-compacting the soil under a lawn, which in turn allows greater oxygen to reach the lawn roots, as well as allowing freer of water and nutrients, which are all essential to good lawn health.

Lawn aeration can be done either with a garden fork to dig into and break up the soil or aeration shoes.

After aeration, the lawn can be fertilised with organic matter, or clay breaking Gypsum which will then go directly into the soil via the open holes to improve soil health.

Lawn aeration will also provide massive benefits in the reduction of many lawn diseases.

© 2020 TurfBreed Pty Ltd • Version: 30_11_2020

FACT SHEET 4 OF 4

Organic lawn care

Fertiliser

Dynamic Lifter

There are organic fertilisers available on the market that are suitable for your lawn.

Dynamic Lifter is a processed and aged poultry manure-based fertiliser and has continued to gain considerable acceptance and increased use.

Dynamic Lifter is an excellent addition to lawn care fertilising, but there are a few points to keep in mind when using it as a lawn fertiliser.

Put Dynamic Lifter onto your lawn directly after lawn mowing, this allows the fertiliser to sit and break down for the longest period between cuts.

Ensure the lawn receives adequate water between now and the next lawn mowing, this aids in breaking down the Dynamic Lifter pellets. Winter is the ideal time of year to use Dynamic Lifter on your lawn.

The longer period between mowing, and the free and abundant water provided by the rain, gives Dynamic Lifter fertiliser pellets plenty of time to decompose.

A fertilising program which includes the winter application of Dynamic Lifter is a great idea.

Natural lawn foods

Natural Lawn Foods such as seaweed derivatives, blood and bone are also available and can be used effectively as part of your lawn care routine.

Spot treat weeds

Instead of applying any type of weed control to your entire lawns surface, it's always far better to only treat the individual weeds wherever possible.

If the weeds cannot be pulled out by hand, then spot treating only the weeds or smallest areas possible will not only save a lot of money on treatments but will put far less harmful substances into your lawn and environment.

Birds are our friends

Invite birds into your yard with a readily available supply of fresh water and by planting trees and shrubs which are native to your region.

Ask at your local garden centre for the best advice of what plants, trees and shrubs are native to your specific region.

Birds not only bring the beauty of nature to our yard but will happily eat many lawn pests before they ever get a chance to become a problem.

© 2020 TurfBreed Pty Ltd • Version: 30_11_2020

NOTES

myhomeTURF

MY LAWN. MY LIFESTYLE.

www.myhometurf.com.au