

GENERAL LAWN CARE



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Proper management will lead to a thick, healthy lawn that resists weeds, insects, and disease problems.

Mowing is the most basic lawn care practice. Haphazard methods can lead to a thick thatch layer (undecomposed grass stems) that prevents water and fertilizer from getting to the soil. The roots of the grass end up growing in the thatch layer rather than the soil. Depending on the varieties of grass you have, the lawn should be kept at a height of about 2-2 1/2". Cut the grass when it is no more than 1" higher than it should be so that the clippings do not smother the grass. If the lawn is mowed frequently enough, there is no benefit in collecting the clippings. Always keep your mower blade sharp.

An established lawn requires about 1" of water per week. If Mother Nature does not provide it, it is best to apply water deeply once per week rather than a little each day. Lawn sprinklers, on average, put out about 1/4" of water per hour. Therefore, four hours of watering once a week per section of lawn should be adequate. Some types of bluegrass go dormant through the hottest part of the summer when there is not enough rain. For these types of grasses it is best to either continue watering the entire summer or not water at all.

Fertilizing should be done 2-3 times per year. In early May fertilize with a standard lawn fertilizer. If you had a crabgrass problem last year, use a pre-emergent crabgrass control with fertilizer product. This should be applied about May 1st, before crabgrass germinates. Broadleaf weeds such as dandelions can be controlled with a "Weed and Feed" product (weed killer and fertilizer combined) or use regular fertilizer and spray for the broadleaf weeds separately. Do not fertilize during the hot summer months (usually late June through mid-August). The second application of fertilizer should be made late August through mid-September using a lower nitrogen fertilizer. This is the best time to spray dandelions and other broadleaf weeds. The third application should be done in mid-October using a higher nitrogen, winterizing fertilizer. When using a fertilizer spreader, be sure the setting is correct. Don't apply fertilizer to wet grass, except for Weed and Feed.

See the Fact Sheet "Weed Control" for more information on handling your lawn's weed problems. Insect and disease problems are very specific and difficult to discuss generally. If you suspect these types of problems, please ask a Dundee salesperson for assistance. Patch disease is a common lawn problem during wet years (see the Fact Sheet "Lawn Blight Diseases" for more information). Do not water your grass so late in the day that it stays wet all night. This will lessen the chance of disease developing in your lawn.

Other lawn reminders - dethatch if the thatch layer is more than 3/4" thick. This is best done in early September but can also be done in late April to early May. Aerate the soil if it is very hard and compacted (a core aerator works best). The ideal time to seed is mid-August to mid-September.

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