



## Cultural Practices

### - A Dozen Ways to a Healthy Lawn- 100% Naturally

1. **Keep the lawn clean and standing straight.** Your spring clean up should remove any debris and lift matted grass.
2. **Fill in bare spots with new grass, seed or sod,** before weeds fill them in.
3. **Treat weak looking or diseased spots with an early fertilizer.**
4. **Remove thatch!**
5. **Aerate the lawn and soil.** Aeration breaks through thatch and opens up the soil to help reduce compaction. It encourages deeper rooting and makes watering easier.
6. **Discover soil pH level.** Once determined you will know to add new soil or lime to neutralize the soil and improve the growth.
7. **Fertilize naturally!**
8. **Mow the right way.** Don't cut the lawn too short. Keep the blades sharp and never cut off too much at once.
9. **Water deeply.** Light watering too often keeps the roots at the surface and makes for weaker grass and thatch formation.
10. **Keep pests at bay naturally.** Nematodes, traps, predators, barriers, bait, "Attack", diatomaceous earth and natural insecticides.
11. **Control weeds:** corn gluten, manually pull, super heat, eco clear and more nitrogen with fertilizer applications. Taller, thicker lawns crowd out many weed types. Controlling soil compaction and watering will eliminate others.
12. **Keep it green in the fall.** Green blades mean food production, for winter storage and root growth. Don't neglect the lawn or start cutting it too short. You can lower the height of the lawn when growth slows down, but keep it green. September is the best month for lawn repair, thatch removal, seeding, aerating, and fertilizing. Keep leaves from matting on the grass and don't let any leaves stay on the grass over the winter.

## Natural Lawn Care Terms & Techniques

**Aeration:** used to relieve compaction and cultivate the turf and soil system. It is best to be done in the spring and/ or the fall, depending on compaction level

**Grass cutting:** keep the grass at a height of 2 ½" - 3 " : never cut more than 1/3 off the lawn height at one time: keep mower blades sharp: keep the underside of the mower deck clean, it allows the grass to be lifted properly before cutting: never add gas or oil to the mower on the lawn: alternate cutting patterns, it allows for a more upright lawn.

**Nematodes:** Beneficial microscopic parasites that infest & kill more than 250 different pest larva.

**Overseeding:** seeding of the lawn areas to thicken up the grass. Best to be combined with aerating and top dressing.

**Soil amendments:** for optimum growth, lawn grasses prefer the soil pH in the 6.5 to 7.0 range. Perennials & shrubs also have specific pH requirements. Soil amendments, lime or gypsum, must be added to bring the soil pH to this level. Perennials, trees & shrubs also benefit from the addition of organic matter to the soil.

**Top dressing:** a quality matured compost or a rich top soil applied to the lawn area will enhance and amend the soil. Improving the soil structure and quality of your lawn. The best time to apply top dressing is in the spring or fall.

**Thatch:** is the build up of living and decaying litter between the soil and the turf. Up to half an inch is healthy, more will be problematic, contributing to the onset of disease and insects. Best time to dethatch is late spring or fall.

**Watering:** to water properly you must be aware of the weather. Lawns do not need watering in early spring. After the spring rains have stopped and we get in to our dry summer weather, use the following technique. Water your lawn deeply, for one hour every three to four days without rain. Do not water after sunset; it promotes mildew. Do not water daily; it promotes thatch build up. Do not water lightly; it promotes shallow root systems.

**After seeding:** Keep seeds damp for 5 – 7 days.

**After sodding:** Water each area for 20-30 minutes daily for the first 5-7 days.  
After fertilizing & nematode applications: water heavily to allow fertilizer or nematodes to soak in.