



Lawn Care Recommendations and Tips

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Recommendations and Tips

Your lawn is a valuable part of your home and makes a statement about who you are. A nice yard is a great value to both the homeowner, the neighborhood, and is critical when going to sell your property. Everyone wants a nice yard and these are a few tips that might help you:

- **Sunny Slope homeowners own the property** all the way to the street including areas between sidewalks and the curb. Don't forget to maintain that area as well as your own lot.
- **Keep your garden free of weeds**, as these persistent plants take up valuable soil nutrients, look messy, and crowd out other plants. Make sure to de-weed your yard frequently during spring, fall, and summer so the job doesn't become overwhelming or too time consuming (a good rule of thumb is to take a certain area every grass cut – maybe front yard one week, then back yard, etc)
- **Mulch not only looks nice in the garden**, but it also helps control weeds and conserve water. When organic mulch is used, it will enrich the soil as well.
 - a. Shredded leaves, dried grass clippings, buckwheat hulls, coca shells, shredded bark, or wood chips, and finished compost are all excellent organic mulches.
 - b. Other mulches can be bought at local garden centers and hardwood stores. Woody mulches, such as uncomposted wood chips, cause a drop in soil nitrogen. These work best if they are composted before application. High-nitrogen mulches, such as grass clippings, may burn your plants. Avoid placing high nitrogen mulches close to plant stems
- **Edging** is another excellent method for controlling weeds and keeping your garden looking neat and elegant. Edging creates a barrier to keep lawn grasses out of the garden and is also useful for containing spreading perennials.
 - a. Make sure to edge along your flowerbeds to create a good barrier between the grass and bed. You can take a flat edge shovel and create a small "trough" with a downward slope inside the bed to show a clean break in your grass and a good way to keep the mulch inside the bed.
 - b. Make sure to edge along your sidewalk, driveway, and any walking or paver stones. Grass and weeds can begin to spread underneath these concrete materials and eventually grow up inside of cracks or weak concrete. This helps prevent that from happening and gives your yard a clean look. It also keeps people from potentially tripping on grass overgrowing concreted walking areas.
- **Treating broadleaf weeds**, which are the bane of lawn lovers. Dandelions, clover, dollarweed, and others invade quickly and spread relentlessly.
 - a. Treat actively growing weeds by applying granular products on a dewy morning.
 - b. Using weed preventers, or pre-emergent herbicides, control crabgrass and other weeds by stopping their seeds from germinating. An application early in the growing season works wonders; it's like vaccinating your lawn against weeds
- Seasonal lawn care is important to maintaining a beautiful looking grass. A long, hot summer sounds like torture for your lawn. Summer's scorching days and improper lawn maintenance turn a lawn brown and weak, allowing weeds, insects, and disease to infiltrate easily. The best way to deal with this summer lawn crises is to prevent them before they start
 - a. Aerate and fertilize the lawn before the grass gets going later in May and June. Don't fertilize grasses again until fall
 - b. Sharpen the lawn mower blade in the spring so the grass will be cut cleanly, not shredded. This will help stave off diseases. Cut only a third of the grass blade when you mow, and raise the mower height gradually by 25 to 50% as temperatures rise. Don't cut the grass lower than 2 inches.
 - c. Water uniformly, deeply, and frequently in the early morning. Your lawn should receive a total of 1 inch of water a week, including rain and irrigation. You can check for uniformity by putting out a half-dozen tuna-size cans throughout the yard and see how long it takes to fill each one then correct if needed. You can also check by poking a screwdriver into the ground: if it goes in easily, the water level is fine; if difficult to push in, water longer & deeper.
 - d. Early to mid fall is the best season to attack lawn weeds. Cut the lawn a bit shorter in the Fall to help the ground dry out more quickly the following Spring, but don't cut below the 2" mark. This is also a good time to apply fertilizer and aerate the soil.