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Caring for Your Lawn

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What is a Lawn (not a trick question)

The Art (and Science) of Having a Lawn

If you have the chance to glimpse the gardens of the rich and famous, you'll notice that most of them have lawns. This isn't surprising because unlike other types of gardens and landscape designs, lawns are easier to maintain and pretty on the eyes because of their neat symmetry.

The Right Way of Choosing a Lawn

For purposes of definition, any area where grass is growing evenly and at a low height can be referred to as a lawn. Sometimes, other plants may grow on it, depending on the preferences of the owner.

If you feel like having a lawn, there are a lot of things that you have to consider first. You can't just wrinkle your nose, point to your neighbor's lawn and have the same one. If the type of soil you're using in your yard is different from your neighbor's, it might not be possible for you to have exactly the same lawn as theirs.

The most important thing to consider when choosing what type of lawn to build or design for your home is its purpose. Why do you wish to have a lawn? Is it

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purely for ornamental and aesthetic reasons? Do you simply want to make your home beautiful?

If that's so, then you probably need not cut your grass too short and you have the liberty of using almost any type of lawn grass. You also have the option of growing other plants and flowers to enhance its appearance – an alternative that's not feasible for other types of lawns because it could hinder movement. Also, make sure to post a "keep off the grass" sign on your lawn or all your hard work would simply go to waste.

Other homeowners are interested in having lawns to cover sloping areas or use it in their terraces. For both purposes, you have to keep your grass at a medium height. Also, there are specific types of grasses such as centipede grass and buffalo grass that are wonderfully suited for such use.

Some prefer to have lawns to play football. If your kids share the same passion – regardless of whether it's the European kind or American – you'll have to keep the grass level no higher than 35mm and no lower than 25mm. Creeping bent grass and other similar types of grass are excellent choices for this kind of lawn. These grass types allow people to move freely and easily, but if they do stumble – the characteristics of these grass types can easily soften the impact of their fall.

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Now, if you don't mind having your lawn trampled upon once in a while then you could use a park styled design for your lawn. With this kind of lawn, you can keep your grass height as high as 60mm but no lower than 40mm. This type of lawn is generally the easiest to maintain because it only needs sunlight and regular watering to grow beautifully. You need not exert too much effort on its care and maintenance. Lawn grass of this kind is the best choice for occasional garden parties.

Another type of lawn you could have is the one using playfield grass. This allows even rougher play than the previously discussed lawn type. With this kind of lawn, you can let your kids scamper around as long as they want and in any way they wish. The ideal grass height for this kind should be from 25 to 35mm. Red fescue grass is a good choice for this particular kind of lawn.

Lastly, if you've got money to burn then you might be interested in having your own mini golf course in your backyard. If so, be aware that this will take careful preparation since different parts of a golf course requires different types of grass and lawn care.

There are other factors to consider besides purpose. Size always matters - how much space can you afford to dedicate to your lawn plans? What about your

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budget? How much are you willing to spend on your lawn? The type of weather and soil you have can also affect your decision. Take these all into consideration before hiring a gardener and landscape artist to put your plans into motion.

Mowing

Mowing Rules to Live By

If it’s your first time to have and care for your own lawn, don’t commit the same mistake that most first-time owners are guilty of. Mowing isn't a simple act of cutting the grass short. Mowing is practically a science for gardeners, and if you don’t follow the established rules for mowing, you might end up with a lawn that seems more like a grass covered burial plot than anything else.

Mowing a Newly Established Lawn

Take the same care, as you would if it were your first time cutting your infant’s hair or nails. For its first cutting, don’t use a mower – that’s like using an electrical razor to cut your baby’s hair. Use an equally sharp instrument like a reaping knife or scythe instead. Cut it no lower than 80mm but no greater than 100mm or at least nothing more than one third of its total height.

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Do the same for its second and third cutting. Only after its first three cuttings can you allow your grass to grow to its ideal height. Afterwards, you should also mow according to weather requirements and grass type.

Mowing According to the Zone

Think of this rule as the zone diet for lawn care. You can use the Internet to determine exactly which planting zone your location falls under.

Lawn Mowing Tips for Zones 1 to 3 – In early spring, you can mow your lawn no more than two and a half inches. Schedule the next mowing appointment for your lawn during the summer: you can mow up to three inches this time just to safeguard your lawn from drying or burning out. Mow it once more during the fall just to hinder growth then make one last appointment with your mower before snowfall.

Lawn Mowing Tips for Zones 4 and 6 – Start mowing late in spring. You should cut it no more than two inches. For the summer, cut it no more than three inches for the same reasons stated above. For fall, you should mow to stop until growth is prevented as well. You need not mow during the winter.

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Lawn Mowing Tips for Zone 5 – Start mowing early in spring, but cut grass no more than two and a half inches. As for the summer, you can cut more – but still no greater than three inches of course – to prevent your lawn from the usual risks of drying and burning. Thanks to your weather, however, you need not mow from fall to winter but you do have to make sure you fertilize and care for your lawn properly during these seasons.

Lawn Mowing Tips for Zones 6 and 7 – An early start to mowing is required once more for lawn owners in these zones. Start moving at spring's arrival, making sure not to cut more than the usual two and a half inch rule. Follow the same rules advocated for the summer. And luckily for homeowners living in Zones 6 to 7, all of you need not mow your lawn from autumn to winter.

Mowing According to Lawn Purpose

Keep your lawn's grass height between 25 to 35mm if you're the area for a playfield – regardless of whether you're playing American or English football or any other outdoor sport.

Mow your grass within the range of 40 to 60mm if you are willing to let people walk on your lawn. Allow greater height (50 to 70mm) for lawns with technical purposes.

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Other Tips for Lawn Mowing

Always keep the blades of your lawnmower sharp and free from rust to attain neat cuts which consequently enhancing the health of your lawn.

It is also better if you take time out at night to mow your lawn rather than during the day because this reduces the stress impact on your lawn. Contrary to popular opinion, cutting and daylight isn't exactly a favorable combination for your lawn.

There is a proper way to mow your lawn and that’s by alternating the direction as you go from Point A to Point B. So if you mowed from your house to the end of your garden in the summer, make sure you do the opposite in spring to prevent your lawn from rutting.

And lastly, have a companion with you when mowing. Having someone with you will prevent you from getting bored too quickly. Mowing is a hard job, but a man’s – or a woman – gotta do what a man’s gotta do!

Equipment

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How to Choose the Right Lawn Equipment

Looking out your window and seeing your lawn in a state of good health is a beautiful way to start the day, but you can only ensure that's going to happen if you're willing to work hard. All types of lawns need regular care and maintenance, and you can do a better job on that if you're using the right lawn equipment.

How to Choose the Right Lawn Equipment

In the old days, people mostly used scythes to cut excessive grass growth from their lawns. You should still use a scythe nowadays but only for the first three cuttings of newly established lawns. Afterwards, using a mower will make the job easier and the results more accurate.

Before choosing which type of lawn mower you need for your lawn, you first have to understand how lawn mowers work in the first place. There are two primary types of lawn mowers: reel and rotating. Reel mowers use blades attached to a reel or cylinder for cutting grass. They are able to cut grass far shorter than rotating mowers, making them ideal for a golf course.

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Rotating mowers on the other hand utilize one or two flat blades to cut excessive grass growth. It can achieve finer cuts than reel mowers and they are far easier to maintain than reel mowers because you have fewer blades to worry about. They also work better with longer grass.

Another way of categorizing lawn mowers is their operation. Non-self-propelled mowers are those requiring manual effort while self-propelled mowers lighten the burden on your shoulders, arms and back.

Obviously, non-self-propelled types are more affordable and probably the most expensive of all would be a manual reel mower. It's highly unlikely that you'll spend more than a hundred dollars for this type of lawn mower. A manual reel mower is more suited for owners with environmental concerns and lawns that are smaller.

Electric mowers are another environmentally friendly choice and unlike manual reel rowers, you can use them for bigger sized lawns. Electric mowers can either be reel or rotating. They're priced from a little over a hundred dollars up to $600. Models vary depending on battery power and other features. If you're particular about the noise level of lawn mowers, you'll definitely love using an electric mower because they can trim your lawn in absolute peace and quiet.

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Although a manual reel mower is the cheapest, it's the non-propelled rotating mower that's most commonly used. It costs around $100 to $700, and you can get a pull or push-button starter.

Self-propelled mowers are for those folks who don't like to sweat too much when mowing on inclined areas or at great distances. If you're interested in this type of mower, always check the engine specifications to ensure that it's powerful enough to conquer whatever terrain or landscape design your lawn has. Check the speed settings as well because you'll want something you can easily control but also gets the job done in optimal time. Rotary mowers of this ilk cost at least $200 but no more than $700 while reel mowers can be double such prices. The latter is more often used for mowing golf courses.

Last but certainly not least is the riding lawn mower. It's unsurprisingly expensive – it can cost as much as $6,500! – But you can mow your lawn in comfort. This can be a practical choice, however, if you've got a big lawn.

Factors to Consider When Buying a Lawn Mower

Now that you know what different lawn mower types represent, it's time to make a buying decision. Make sure, however, you consider the following factors first:

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Lawn Area – How big is your lawn? If it's no bigger than your bedroom, then it might not be entirely practical to purchase a riding lawn mower.

Budget – How much can you spend for lawn equipment? If you want high-end lawn equipment to fit your meager budget, are you willing to buy them secondhand?

Grass and Lawn Type – Reel mowers are better suited for lawns that require comparatively shorter grass heights while rotating mowers are better for grass and lawn types benefiting from finer cuts and clippings.

Besides a lawn mower, there are other pieces of lawn equipment you can purchase to have an easier time of maintaining your lawn such as edgers, dethatchers, leaf blowers, and wood chippers. Visit your local gardening shop and check them out one by one.

Watering

10 Watering Tips to Give Your Lawn the Best of Care

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Although your lawn needs watering just like any other garden, you should make sure that you're giving it the exact amount of water it needs. Watering your lawn less or more than it needs could end up in an absolute disaster.

10 Watering Tips to Give Your Lawn the Best of Care

Tip #1 One Rule for Most Zones – If you live within planting zones one to seven then rejoice because you only have one main rule on watering to follow, and that's to water your lawn frequently during the summer and especially if there's an oncoming draught. This is, of course, assuming that you want your lawn to stay healthy-looking even in the heat of the summer. You may however allow them also to "hibernate" during the summer and let them go dry. Choose which color for your lawn you prefer more during summer: brown or green?

Tip #2 Determining the Necessary Amount of Water – Regardless of the type of lawn grass you're growing, watering your lawn until the soil soaks up to one inch of water for a depth of 6 to 8 inches is ideal.

Tip #3 The Right Time to Water – The arrival of summer doesn't mean you immediately have to water your lawn if you've chosen to breathe life into it despite the heat. Allow your lawn to experience the impact of drought or

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summer for a few days before you start watering it. Letting this happen will improve its rooting.

On the other hand, if mowing is better done at night, water is better done during the day because water and sunlight are a more favorable combination. As much as possible, water your lawn early in the morning and especially when it has been benefiting from morning dew. Watering during early mornings also allows your soil to soak in more water, which will consequently make the nutrients from it last longer.

Tip #4 An Exception for Newly Established Lawns – Although lawns don't need as much moisture as other types of gardens, it's different when the lawn's newly established. A lawn in its baby stages will actually benefit more from a slightly increased frequency of watering. This schedule should be maintained until the grass has been properly seeded.

Tip #5 Why Over Watering Isn't Good – Use a rain gauge to prevent you from over watering your lawn. If you let that happen, the water supply of your lawn will actually decrease rather than increase. Worse, over watering makes your lawn more vulnerable to pests and harder to maintain and care for. Since lawns look better when they're trimmed, you need to use water only when necessary so that you don't have to trim your lawn repeatedly.

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Tip #6 When Not to Water – There are certain instances when your lawn won't benefit from a good dousing.

Tuning in to your weather station will let you know when to expect rain. If there's about to be a downpour of rain, postpone your watering session and just let nature take care of your duty.

If you have just finished fertilizing your lawn, you should also refrain from watering because this could reduce the positive effects of fertilization.

Tip #7 Improving Irrigation – Achieving precise and positive results from watering isn't easy, and that's when improving irrigation comes in. Using an excellent irrigation system for your lawn will reduce the need for watering and increase the chances of maintaining the health of your lawn even during summer droughts.

There are several ways for you to improve your lawn's irrigation system. Limit thatch removal, use nitrogen for cool season lawn grasses, and air out your soil consistently.

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Tip #8 Read the Signs – There are times when your lawn may suffer from lack of water. You'll know this when you see footprints you've left maintain their shape even after several hours have passed.

Tip #9 Hose vs. Sprinklers – A sprinkler system is the better choice over a water hose because you can apply it strategically so that all parts of your lawn are watered simultaneously. A sprinkler system also allows you better control over water volume and power.

Tip #10 Water Conservation – Lawn owners with concerns about water conservation can ease their conscience in several ways such as prohibiting people and animals from tramping over their lawn, letting grass grow beyond its required height, and avoiding using nitrogen during the summer.

Soil

A Step-by-Step Guide to Soil Preparation for Your Lawn

The foundation of a good lawn is its soil type. Without the ideal soil type – and that's loam – it would be difficult for you to create and maintain a beautiful lawn.

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Conducting a Soil Test

The first step you should take is conducting a soil test to know if your soil type is loam and not anything else. There are basically four types of soil: clay, sand, silt, and of course loam. You can guess the type of soil your garden has just by gathering a handful.

If the soil in your hand is clumped together tightly it's most likely clay. If you squeeze it and the soil feels rough and seemingly filled with bits and pieces then it's most likely sand. If, on the other hand, the mixture feels too smooth and almost liquid-like because of its inability to maintain any shape then it's most likely silt. But if the soil mixture seems a compromise of all three then that's probably loam and you may be ready to build your lawn.

Of course, that's just an initial test to be performed. To ensure that you've made an accurate guess, you should take several samples from all parts of your lawn. You could send the samples to a clinic for accurate testing or purchase a soil testing kit and obtain the results yourself.

Smoothing Out Soil

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Texture isn't the only important factor when choosing the right soil for your lawn. You should also ensure that it has a smooth and even surface by taking out even the smallest visible stones and other objects in your soil. A smoother surface will facilitate digging later on. Take out all weeds that appear and if they persist in growing, you may use chemicals to hinder their growth.

Turning Your Soil into Loam

Let’s say that your soil tests produce poor results. Don’t despair because you can use organic matter to improve the soil quality and turn it into loam soil. Soil additives like peat and sand mixture, compost, mushroom manure, and peat moss can be used. Later on, when your soil reaches the appropriate grade, be sure to add lime throughout your lawn area for an improved overall effect.

Checking the Ph Value of Your Soil

Perhaps you’re wondering why you need to add lime to your lawn soil, and the answer is to lower the acidity of your soil. The health of your lawn will improve if the acidity level of your soil is moderate, ranging from 5.5 to 6.5. If, however, acidity level is too high, that’s when you add lime. The use of lime will also improve your soil’s structure. Add sulphate from ammonia instead if the acidity level of your soil is too low.

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Finishing the Grade

After adding lime, you now have to finish grading your soil for your lawn plans. Start by digging out up to half a foot of depth. Rake spots to obtain optimal ground levels. Continue raking and rolling the soil until you finally smooth the area of your new soil.

Soil Aerification

The soil of your lawn should also be aired out once in a while. This process is referred to as aerification, and you can achieve it either with a fork or roller. When airing out the soil, you bring out brome soil and expose it to surface air. Brome soil has a high content of silicate sand, and this can improve the air and water circulating in your lawn soil. Use brome soil if you've excessively watered your surface or topsoil.

Other Tips to Remember for Soil Preparation for Your Lawn

Prepare your soil with drainage in mind because lawns are one type of garden that requires a regular and strict watering schedule.

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The ideal soil depth for your lawn is around fifteen centimeters or half a foot. If you don't wish to dig that deep, however, then a minimum of four inches should suffice.

After getting the topsoil ready, use a lawn roller – not a lawn mower – to discover any low spots in the area that you might have overlooked in the past. If you find one, fill it using the same graded soil you used for the rest of the lawn then let it firm either by watering or rainfall.

Fertilizing

Types of Fertilizer to Use for a Great Lawn

Maintaining a healthy and attractive lawn is an important thing for most households. It reflects how much you take care of your property. It pays to welcome friends and visitors with a refreshing view of your nice lawn.

Fertilizing Your Lawn

One way to make sure that your lawn stays healthy is to make use of fertilizers. Fertilizing the grasses in your lawn will keep them green and healthy. It

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ensures that they don't dry out easily because of the right nutrients supplied to the soil. This is also a way of making sure that the grasses in the lawn won't be subject to diseases.

Types of Fertilizers Available

For your fertilizing efforts, it is best to know what elements will be needed. A typical fertilizer will contain the three elements nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium. Each fertilizer will make use of these elements. However they can differ in the percentage. You can easily determine the proportion of each according to the digits provided in the fertilizer package.

Nitrogen is the fertilizing element that ensures your grass gets green. It is perfect for fighting the pests in the environment as it maintains the steady growth of the grass. Phosphorous will help the grass grow firmer in its roots. Potassium is perfect to help the lawn withstand droughts and fight off diseases.

The Right Fertilizer for the Right Grass Type

It is very important to choose the right kind of fertilizer that will go well with the grass type you have in your lawn. Part of caring for the lawn is to know the kind of grass you have so that you can properly respond to its needs and

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circumstances. For example, to ensure that your grass is healthy, the soil that you use must fit the climate in your locality.

As to fertilizing the lawn, it will definitely help in making the grass healthier. However, if you don't know how to properly administer the dose, then you might overdo it. This can lead to facilitating the thickness of the grasses that will entail more cutting on your part to maintain the lawn.

In this regard, it is best to know your grass type so you can administer the right fertilizer. Grasses are usually classified according to the climate that they can withstand. Some are for cooler climates. Some grow better in warmer places. Thus, the key to choosing the right fertilizer is to know the grass type. Know what conditions they can grow best and let the fertilizing efforts facilitate it.

There are also grasses that are prone to certain diseases or conditions. You can take note of these aspects to get the right fertilizer to use. For example, some grasses tend to rust. This may be difficult to avoid but the probability of its occurrence can be minimized if supplied with the right amount of fertilization.

Liquid Fertilizer vs. Dry Fertilizer

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Fertilizers can also be dry or liquid. Proper fertilizing of your lawn must take note of the type that will be most favorable to your grasses.

Dry or granular fertilizers are common. They are easy to use and administer to your lawn. They also tend to last a long time. The fertilizing effect can work for your lawn for months. This method will be less costly. At the same time, it is said to be the better option if your lawn is in a colder climate.

Liquid fertilizers are the kind that you usually see in spray bottles. The nutrients needed by the plants are mixed with water to make a concentrate. This is perfect for lawns with problematic soil characteristics. The liquid fertilizer will ensure that the nutrients will reach the roots.

Know the kind of fertilizer that you can best use at the growth stage of the grass. For example, when your grass is starting to grow, it can make good use of fertilizing elements that will make the root grow stronger. If your lawn will have to weather the winter or colder days, then potassium can do the work.

Growing your grasses healthy is the key to a great lawn. Simply take note of the needs of the grass like the need of fertilizing to ensure the right nutrients. With this, you can definitely expect a nice lawn for your household.

Thatching

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The Need for Thatching to Maintain the Good Lawn

There are many ways to come up with a good lawn. It pays to have a well-maintained lawn. This will help you keep that lawn attractive and healthy. That is why you have to be cautious of thatch in your lawn.

What Is a Thatch?

You don't need thatch on your lawn. Thatch can be easily identified as one of the debris that eventually accumulates in the area below your grass base. They are patchy and brown. They aren't good for a healthy lawn. The thatch can also be those grass stems, clippings or roots that have dried up. They decompose eventually and build up.

Any lawn that is properly maintained by the owner can stay thatch-free for quite some time. However, once the lawn gets older, thatch may appear. If this happens, then dethatching will be necessary. Your thatching efforts will be crucial in ensuring that the debris won't develop in your soil.

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There are reasons that will cause thatching to occur. It is best to get to know them if you want your lawn to be free from thatch. The most common reason that thatch accumulates in the soil is attributed to failing to aerate the soil. Regularly cutting the grass can also contribute when the clippings are left on the grounds to decompose.

The Necessity of Thatching Your Lawn

It is very important to get rid of the thatch in your lawn. Just be sure that there is enough thatch in your lawn to remove so that your efforts at dethatching will be worth the expense. It is also equally important to know the available options for you to effectively get rid of the thatch.

Be sure to check properly the amount of thatch that accumulated in your lawn. Normally, thatch won't be a bother. However, be alarmed when they accumulate up to half an inch high. Their presence at this stage will hamper the proper distribution of nutrients to the soil. This can even encourage the presence of pests in your lawn.

Thatching is also crucial for people who have shaded lawns. The shade can sometimes contribute to the growth of thatch. There are grasses that don't

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thrive well in shaded areas. They can wilt and eventually decompose. This can later accumulate as thatch.

Ways to Do the Thatching

There are alternatives that you can take to effectively rid your lawn of the unnecessary thatch. Be sure that you take the option that will best fit your circumstances.

Aeration is the best alternative to prevent the thatch problem. This can help prevent the growth of thatch and it is especially helpful if there are still very few of them to contend with. The process will allow the soil to have a facilitated passage for water, air and nutrients.

An aerator can be used to achieve this goal. There are aerators that can create holes in the ground with spikes. Others can help by pulling on the plugs by puncturing the ground.

You have the option to hire the services of a professional to get your lawn properly aerated. Of course, the service will come for a fee. This is why most people would rather do the aerating themselves so they can save money.

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Normally, a rake can be used to manually aerate the lawn. This is manageable for households with small lawns because the task can take a good amount of time to finish. It will do well to overcome thatch with less than an inch height.

There is also an option to use the right equipment to aerate your lawn. Lawn aerator equipment will be perfect for households with larger lawns and with more thatch to get rid of. This will use an engine to cut the thatch on the ground surface. You can even choose to modify the depths the lawn aerator will attempt to reach.

However, lawn aerator equipment doesn't come cheap. They tend to be very heavy and also very expensive. This is why if you can't afford to purchase your own lawn aerator, then it is best to rent one. There are gardening centers and rental outlets that you can approach to help you in this regard.

Maintain a good lawn for your household. Keep it free from thatch. This way, you can maintain that attractive and healthy look that will make you proud.

Types of Grasses

Get to Know the Right Types of Grasses for a Better Lawn

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Yards and lawns are made more attractive and greener by the grasses planted in them. The grass can give the best atmosphere to your lawn as you welcome friends and visitors to your home. This is why you have to know the right types of grasses to use for your lawn to be able to bring about the beauty in your immediate outdoors.

Different Types of Grasses

There are many kinds of grasses. It isn't enough to simply just say you need grass. With the many types of grasses you will see, it is very important to make use of the one that will best fit the needs of your lawn.

Types of Grasses According to Climate

Grasses are generally classified according to the climate where they can best thrive. There are grasses that can grow fast in the colder places. The list will include the likes of ryegrasses, bluegrass, grama grass and fescues. Other grasses are more amenable to grow faster in warmer places like the St. Augustine grass, Bermuda grass, Carpet grass or Bahia grass.

Types of Grasses According to Color

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Grasses also come in various colors. The colors differ according to the species of the grass type. They can be blue and silver or green and silver, gold and yellow, bronze, gray or red grasses. They can come in different hues and shades. Some can be bright. Some may give out warm colors. Others give out a cool and dark feel. When you see them during the right season, you may even get a colorful array of grasses.

Types of Grasses According to Use

The grasses can also differ according to their lawn usage. Some are simply out there to lay the grounds for the lawn. There are grasses that you see everywhere that create the green environment for most homes. The types of grasses used for lawn usage are Bermuda grass, buffalo grass and the St. Augustine grass.

Some are intended to enhance a lawns design. You can use the different types of grasses according to their colors to give an ornamental touch to your lawn. This is a perfect way to give style rather than just plain greenery. It can be the best finish that will complement your landscape design. You can achieve aesthetics through picking the right types of grasses for your lawn.

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There are also other uses for distinct grass types other than serving as grounds for the lawn or functioning for aesthetics. Grasses for one are very crucial in playgrounds. Golf courses can't do without the right types of grasses to provide the greenery. The bent grass is the most common choice for golf sites. Tennis courts use ryegrasses to make the grounds more favorable for play while the fescue grass types are dependable for the greens.

Sod vs. Seed

In choosing among the different types of grasses, you may find it helpful to distinguish between the sods and the seeds. To lay down the grasses on the lawn, the method you can use can either be through laying the sod or sowing the seeds.

Sods are grasses that have been grown already. All you will need to do is to have it brought to your doorsteps and simply lay it to your lawn or yard. This may sound simple. However, the process can also take considerable effort. Also, you will have to limit your grass of choice to what is available in sod form.

Seeding the lawn can be relatively easier but you will have to wait for some time before you can achieve your desired lawn. This is also a more practical option because it isn't as expensive. It will also give you more choices as to the

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grass types. In this regard, it is helpful to be acquainted with the sprigs, stolons and plugs. The sprigs are the small stems that you will find in some of the grasses that bear the flowers. Other grass types grow horizontal stems that are known as the stolons. These will be used to plant new grass.

Knowing the different types of grasses will be helpful in your lawn endeavors. This will educate you to choose properly the right grass type that will bring out the best in your yard.

Let’s discuss seeding versus sod in depth in the next two chapters.

Seeding a New Lawn

The How To in Seeding a New Lawn

The lawn is a very important feature to your garden and ultimately to the household. It serves as the green touch that gives your home a more relaxed or formal feel depending on how the lawn is planted. This is why you have to seriously consider your decisions to come up with a lawn that will serve the needs of your family.

Proper Methods for Planting a New Lawn

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To achieve aesthetic and functional ends for the garden and the yard, it is best to know the proper methods for planting a new lawn. You can't expect those beautiful grasses to simply propagate on their own. If you do wait you'll end up with a yard full of weeds.

How to Start a Healthy Lawn

The healthy and attractive grass in your lawn will depend on how you lay them out on the ground. There are two methods that can be followed. You can choose either to sow seed or lay sod on your lawn. For most people, the more practical option is to sow seed. Seeding a new lawn will give you more options as to the kind of grasses you can use. This is also relatively cheaper compared to the alternative.

Seeding a New Lawn

There are a number of things to keep in mind in seeding a new lawn. The soil must be prepared so that it will have the best condition for the grass to grow. Make sure that the soil is settled enough before you start seeding. You can wait for the soil to be firmed by the rain dries up naturally. You can also choose to

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get a heavy roller to keep the soil compact. Some people use their feet to settle the ground.

You should also ensure that there is enough drainage when you start seeding the new lawn. Make sure there are no weeds in the soil that may eventually deprive your seeds of their needed nutrients. It is also a good idea to even out the soil. You can use a rake to level out the surface. This will keep your grounds free of slopes and it will be easier for you to mow the lawn later on.

The Seeding Process Tips

Next thing on your itinerary is the seed mixture. It is also equally important to know the types of grasses you'll use in seeding the new lawn. You have to pick the seed mixture with the certain grass types that will grow best in the climate of your locality. This way, you can ensure that when seeding a new lawn, the grasses will grow nice and healthy.

Be sure and read the chapter about the types of grasses where we discuss this in depth.

At the same time, you have to be cautious of certain grass types that are perfect for lawn usage like the Buffalo grass and the Bermuda grass.

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There are also types of grasses that are very susceptible to diseases and pests. If you want lawns that have low-maintenance requirements, then determine the type that will do exactly that.

Once you have chosen your seed mixture, you can distribute the seeds to their respective distribution on the lawn. Follow the procedure given on the seed package for a particular grass type. This is normally done every square yard in the lawn.

You also have to regularly water the seeds until they start to germinate and get settled.

It is equally crucial to safeguard the areas where you have done the seeding. You can use a rope so you can avoid people from stepping on the ground where you are expecting the grass.

There are instances when grasses don't grow in some areas where you've planted them. You can always reseed these areas. Be sure you follow the proper steps in the seeding process.

Sod Lawns

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Tips on How to Sod a New Lawn

You've got to take care of your lawn. This is one of the most significant areas on your in your property. This is the first thing your friends and visitors will see when they come to your house. This is why you can't afford to let your lawn stay bare. You have to ensure that you provide the best welcome to people who will come visit your home with a nice and healthy lawn.

It is very important to make use of the right type of grasses to achieve that green lawn. Your grass will provide foliage for the ground. It also serves the function of making your immediate outdoors as natural as possible. Some grasses can even have ornamental functions if you know how to choose and where to put them.

Creating a New Lawn

A healthy lawn is the ultimate goal. However, you can't expect the grass to grow overnight. You need to take some extra effort to bring the green into your yard. This is where you have to know how to develop a new lawn. There are two methods to create that new lawn. You can choose to sow the seed or to sod a new lawn.

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What Are Sod Lawns?

Sod lawns are the lawns with grasses taken from commercially produced grasses. The grasses used are especially cultivated and grown. The sods are then purchased into divided sections. All the owner needs to do is to measure the size of the lawn where the sod shall be placed and purchase the corresponding quantity.

Once the sod has been delivered to your doorstep, it is wise to install the sections right away. Remember that the sods are comprised of grass species that will need the right environment to thrive. If you prolong the time they remain in rolls, they will likely wilt. Undo the rolls of sod as soon you get them. Lay them on the ground just like you would a carpet.

Make sure that you have laid down the sod properly. Make sure there are no vacant spots. Water the sod that you have laid on the ground to help in settling the sod in the soil. This should be done regularly to make sure that the sod attaches to the ground.

Choosing a Sod Lawn, the Plus and the Minuses

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Sods will differ according to their grades. Each sod will have its own particular characteristics depending on the species of grass in the mixture. You have to get the right kind of grass to serve a certain purpose, whether functional or ornamental. Thus you must take into account these details when choosing a sod lawn.

The Pluses of a Sod Lawn

Sod lawns can be a plus to you if you are very particular about the areas where you grow your grass for the lawn. You can also make the choice of type of grass species you will get for your sod. This way, they can be grown in the area you want so you can easily get acclimated to the location.

To sod a new lawn is also a good option for people who want nice greenery in their yards right away. You can easily purchase the sods and put them into use right away. This is perfect for having a workable lawn as soon as you need it.

The Minuses of Sod Lawn

One minus of using a sod lawn is that most of them will bring weed problems. Sods often come with a mixture of different species of grasses. It is very likely

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that you will end up with a sod with an undesirable trait. This will make your lawn maintenance more stressful.

Commercially cultivated sods are also expensive. They can cost you a lot, especially if you have quite a big yard to fill. Make sure you have the budget that can support your efforts to sod a new lawn.

The circumstances of sods also give you very limited time to keep the installation on hold. They have to be laid down as soon as you get them to avoid wasting the rolls.

You won't find a better alternative for an instant lawn!

Chemicals

The Truth About Lawn Chemicals

Your green dream for your lawn may propel you to take the easy way out and inject your landscape with as much pesticides as you can. But are you really aware of what these pesticides can do to you, your lawn and your pets? The truth has long been shelved in lieu of taking the easy way out and yielding

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green grass in the shortest possible time. After all, that's what you see advertised.

Before we head off to discuss the chemicals and how they affect your lawn, let us first understand how your natural lawn exists when it is free of chemicals. Much of the sustenance of the grass relies on the soil. The soil has a natural acidic pH level, and is balanced by beneficial microorganisms that live in your lawn. Insects such as the ladybug, the ground beetle, wasps, fireflies and spiders, together with your friendly earthworm help cultivate the soil and balance that pH level for you. It is out of healthy and well-watered soils that deeply established roots emanate from. But this doesn't come naturally. It takes a lifetime of love, attention, maintenance and patience on the part of the lawn owner to be able to reap such lovely fruits of labor naturally.

Today, most of the lawns you find are disease-infested and not really the epitome of the green, green grass of home. In come pesticides, so-called quick fixes that “help” you achieve that green soil without hassles and trouble.

The pesticides do make your lawn appear greener, and this may be visually appealing to you. But you'll find that beneath that lovely green exterior lies an untold horror that caused severe detriment to you, your environment and your lawn, with unpredictably long-term repercussions you may not be prepared for.

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The chemicals that claim to rescue your lawn actually impede the natural scheme of things in your lawn. For one thing, chemicals affect the pH of your soil. This leaves the beneficial insects with nothing more to do, and more inhalation of supremely harmful chemicals to their biological make. You will find that the natural ways of your lawn in fighting off weeds and disease are now minimized. This will further make your lawn more dependent on the chemicals to survive. You will have to inject more chemicals to produce the same lovely green effect on your lawn.

Now the evil of pesticides doesn't just go to your lawn, but it extends further to humans, animals and the environment. That is the greatest inconvenience that chemicals cause. While it was designed to help the lawn, it backfired on other elements of the environment. The nitrates and phosphates in pesticides cause algae blooms in the lakes and ponds. This causes a great decrease in the oxygen levels of the water. Most lawns rely on freshwater sources for watering. Now, if oxygen levels decrease, it also affects the water in lakes and ponds. What's worse, the vapor from pesticides pervades in the environment-- weeks, months or even years after it has been placed on your lawn. This poses a great risk and makes your entire area prone to unpleasant diseases and repercussions that pesticides have been discovered to cause.

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Adverse health effects have been directly linked to the use of pesticides. Over the years, it has been noted that those who are living in agricultural areas are more prone to a host of unpleasant diseases such as asthma, cancers, birth defects, infertility among males, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, Parkinson's disease, ADHD, and fatal deaths, among many others.

All hope is not lost, however. There are fertilizers that aren't as harmful as these chemicals. Mineral fertilizers are more able to cultivate the natural ways of defending your lawn from unwanted elements. Organic means and soil testing kits serve as barometers that help you get to the root of the problem instead of relying on chemicals for the shortcut.

Insects

Your Primer to Lawn Insects: Types, Symptom and Control

Insect infestation has destroyed many a dream of having a green and healthy lawn. You'll find that insects don't really cause the destruction of your lawn. It is just a manifestation of ill-tended soil and an imbalanced environment that attracts insects. As you repair this root damage, you will also need to get to know the different types of insects and how they can be eliminated as you work towards a better lawn.

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The planting zone where your lawn is placed affects your insect combating strategy. There are seven major regions in the country with different insect infestations rates and types: Coastal Northwest, Mountain West, Southwest, Midwest and Northeast, Transition Zone, Central Southeast, and Gulf Coast and Florida. Laws in certain regions also affect your ability to control the infestations of these insects.

The general strategy of pesticides for almost every insect type includes eradicating the insect in its larval and defenseless form. However, these have adverse environmental effects, and there have been alternatives made to change this. To detect the presence of which insects have infiltrated your lawn, the drench test is conducted.

Moles and voles adhere to general symptoms of lawn devastation. Spike traps may be used especially when the moles and voles are at their most active phase in attacking your lawn. Army worms and cut worms, on the other hand, can be distinguished by signs of chewed leaves and cuts near the circular or depressed portion of your lawn. Killing army worms and cut worms may be done by reducing thatch and eliminating soggy areas of your lawn.

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Billbugs are the only species of weevils that turns your lovely grass into straw. Irrigation, fertilizers and an increase of mowing height help eliminate billbugs. Billbugs are also known to resist certain organisms such as the Beauveria fungus. Having this specie in your lawn will surely make your billbugs willfully leave your lawn.

The black turf grass notoriously attacks Kentucky, ryegrass, annual blue grass, and bent grass. These types are under the spell of black turfgrass if they are peeling, have diminished roots and the grass is brown in color. Aeration and altering of mowing height usually does the trick.

The chinch bug is another common harmful lawn insect. Also known as St. Augustine grass, the chinch bug creates patches of yellow and brown in your lawn. Reduction of thatch and nitrogen can kill the chinch bug. Also, planting resistant models such as Floralaw or Florata can help your chinch bug say goodbye. If you find your lawn becoming more brown than yellow, you are most likely infested with lawn moths. Irrigation, fertilization and thatch reduction are also techniques you can try to eliminate the lawn moth.

If you find leaves getting curly and the tips are growing, plus a hint of sticky substances, aphids are the culprits. While there are pesticides tailored to kill this culprit, you can also find that a strong jet of water does the trick. If there

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are white bumps and yellow patches on your lawn, you might be suffering from the attack of the euonymus scale. Dormant oil spray usually prevents this.

Irregular shaped holes are the best symptom of presence of snails and slugs. If you find the base part being more attacked than other parts, you definitely need to lay a board and pick them up when you spot them in your lawn. The board will serve as your way of capturing them.

White grubs and its older version (scarabs) are the lawn maker's biggest enemies. The large patch of brown grass attests to the fact that these insects mean to harm your lawn. Uprooting them manually during the moist times of the year will help you diminish the presence of those nasty white grubs. Milky Spore is also a popular way of eliminating this, brought about by proper timing and understanding of their life cycle.

Have you ever seen unsightly mounds and tunnel-like installations in the root area? Ants are your enemy in this aspect. You must also learn to differentiate well if the culprit is an ant or a termite. There are about 5,000 species of ants, so you must check which of these species are harming your lawn. Depriving them of water and organic material usually does the trick, as well as destroying their colony base. Put a yummy jelly in the lawn as bait, and follow their trail so that you can destroy them at the root.

Controlling Weeds

Tips for Controlling Weeds and Keeping Your Garden Beautiful

The problem with weeds is that you never know your lawn has them until there's a vigorous overgrowth that threatens your turf and your plants. Most lawn owners just don't pay attention to an innocent, scrawny stem with tiny leaves until it turns into a monster. And when it does, that's often the time when it's next to impossible to get rid of the weed. If you want to manage and maintain your lawn, learn the effective ways of controlling weeds.

What is a weed?

According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, a weed is a plant that people don't value and has a tendency to overpower other plants, specifically those we consider desirable. This is a tricky definition, considering that one man's weed is another man's wild flower. In order to decide whether or not to destroy a certain growth, it's best to ask yourself whether you want that plant in your garden or not. If the answer is no, then it's time to get rid of it.

Why you should control weeds

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Weeds are notorious for being fast growers, able to outgrow other garden plants. Because they will overpower and probably destroy these plants, we find them annoying, especially since most of them don't have any apparent use. Furthermore, most weeds don't have the aesthetic appeal that other plants have.

Is there any reason why I should not be so harsh on weeds?

Weeds do have their advantage. They are the favorite residence of many pest and bug-killing insects such as ladybugs and bees. If you have these insects in your garden, you can even control the incidents of pest infestation in your turf. However, if pests aren't a problem, you probably have no use for weeds and should control their growth.

Controlling weeds the old-fashioned way

There are three kinds of weeds – the perennials, biennials and the annuals. Perennial weeds are the type of weeds that recur over the seasons and often produce seeds every year. Weeds such as milkweed, dandelions and blackberries are considered perennial weeds.

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Biennial weeds are the types that survive for two years. During the last year, these weeds flower and develop seeds. Annual weeds, such as thistles, chickweed and crabgrass, maintain a yearly life cycle. Unlike perennial weeds, they are easier to control.

If you don't want to use chemicals and if the weeds in your lawn are still manageable, try to control their growth by simply uprooting the weeds. The best way to do this is to cultivate the soil by breaking up the surface. This aerates the soil and makes it soft, so weeds are easier to pull out. Do this when the weeds are still young to ensure that no flower or seed is propagated or spread. Perform this task regularly to make sure that any growth within a season is controlled.

An old garden practice called mulching is also an effective way to keep weeds under control. This process helps control weeds by using a thick layer of materials such as leaves, bark, and grass clippings and other organic matter and spreading the mixture over your lawn. Not only does this organic material keep your soil rich and healthy, it also prevents sunlight from reaching the seeds of the weeds. Since they can't grow and establish the weeds die.

If you use these natural methods of controlling weeds, you will have to be vigilant and patient. Pulling out leaves and preventing seeds from growing

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doesn't guarantee they won't sprout again. However, you can keep controlling them until they are either minimized or eliminated.

Using herbicides

Weeds are tough and flexible. In fact, there is no all-in-one weed-killing product on the market today that is capable of destroying all kinds of weeds. If you want an effective way of controlling them, first learn how to recognize them. If you know which weeds are found in your lawn, you'll be able to find the right product to use.

There are two kinds of herbicides – the systemic type and the contact type. The weeds, through the leaves and the root system, absorb the systemic herbicide. These kill the weeds from the inside out. Contact herbicides, as their name implies, kill from the outside in. They prevent the weeds from using photosynthesis to survive.

Both these herbicides come as either selective or nonselective varieties. Selective herbicides are those that are chemically capable of killing only certain weeds without affecting other plants in your lawn. However, the nonselective variety will kill regardless of what they come in contact with.

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The best way to use these chemicals for controlling weeds is to follow the manufacturer's directions. This is also the safest method, considering that much of the failure (and danger) associated with the use of herbicides is due to inaccurate or incorrect application. Use during early spring in order to attack weeds when they are at their weakest.

Manual Watering vs. Automatic Sprinklers

Tips for Using Manual and Automatic Sprinklers

When it comes to watering your garden and providing irrigation for your plants, your trusty old garden hose will perform well. The only problem is keeping up and maintaining an efficient watering system that will benefit your lawn and prevent water waste. If you want to use a system that can offer both convenience and efficiency, consider installing either a manual or an automatic sprinkler system.

Go manual or automatic?

If you're the type of person who has time to spend on your lawn or garden and don’t mind the job, go for the manual sprinkler system. A manual system also

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allows you to control the use of water personally, so you can be assured of the efficient use of your resources.

The only problem with a manual sprinkler system is that it requires someone to open the valves in order to allow the sprinkler to work. This is probably a good system for you if you're the type of person who has time to spend in the garden. If your lifestyle or work requires you to leave your garden for days or weeks at a time, a manual sprinkler system may not be the right system for you.

If you prefer a water sprinkler system you don't have to think about, then choose an automatic sprinkler. This system allows you to water your plants on a set schedule. When used properly, an automatic sprinkler system can provide an efficient watering system for your lawn, giving you more time to take care of other things. Incorrect use of an automatic sprinkler system can often lead to the use of about 30% to 50% more water than your garden or lawn needs.

There are different types of automatic sprinkler systems. Some can even detect moisture levels and turn on automatically if the ground gets too dry. Automatic sprinkler systems have timers that can be electronically controlled, so the sprinkler can turn on or off without any manipulation from you.

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Sprinkler types

There are different sprinkler types that you can use uniformly or in combination, depending on the needs of your lawn. A rotary sprinkler is one that spins 360 degrees, sprinkling water in a circle and is ideal for use in garden beds and small lawns. This covers about 50 feet in diameter. Water pressure may be adjusted.

Spray sprinklers throw water like fountains and cover about 10 to 30 feet of lawn space. This is a good sprinkler to use if your lawn area is small or irregularly shaped. An oscillating sprinkler allows for quick watering and is probably the most common. It also has the highest lawn coverage and is ideal for rectangular lawns.

An impulse sprinkler rotates partially or in full and shoots water at intervals. This offers coverage of about 80 feet and is best used in large lawns and garden beds. Although water flow may be adjusted, this is the type of sprinkler that shoots water slowly and is ideal if you have newly planted seeds or plants.

Spacing your sprinklers

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It's important that you take measurements and plan or design a layout for your sprinkler system. This will save you from a lot of wasted effort and unnecessary equipment. Consider the size and shape of your lawn to determine the number and placement of the sprinkler heads and the right water pressure to use. If your lawn is especially large, you might also need to use more than one water circuit.

Where to position your sprinkler heads is an important consideration. Your main objective is uniformity in terms of water coverage, so you'll need to make sure that one sprinkler head will throw water that will overlap the next sprinkler head. Sprinklers are designed this way, to make sure that they don't miss watering certain areas of your lawn.

Overlapping is referred to as head to head coverage or spacing, which assures no dry spots. Position sprinklers to provide 80-100% overlap. While this may seem like a lot, you'll see the difference if you try a sprinkler system with heads that are farther away from each other. Try to keep to the recommended sprinkler head positioning to ensure uniform watering. Sprinkler heads are often installed using a square grid or triangular layout.

Digging your trenches

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Digging is probably the most important and most time consuming part of your sprinkler system installation. Take note of your soil type and make sure to not to touch or damage any underground utilities. If you can, use a trencher to shorten your digging time and make installation easier. By using a trencher, you'll have a less messy job.

Trenches should be from 6" to 10" deep. You might also allow for a ¼" drop every five feet to allow water to drain in one direction during the winter. With hard work, you'll probably complete this project within about 3 days, more if your yard is bigger.

Starting a Lawn Care Business

Tips for Starting Your Own Lawn Care Business

A lawn care business is an excellent business to start if you only have a small investment. As long as you have the necessary skills and knowledge, it's also easy to start and manage. You'll also get to do the things you love and have a good amount of work flexibility since you get to choose your own hours. If you're thinking about going into the lawn care business, here are some tips to help you start on the right foot:

Have the basic knowledge and tools.

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A lawn care business will require that you know the basics about lawns and gardens. People will hire you based on your skills and what you can do to ensure that their lawns are well kept and maintained, so if you already have these skills, you're ready to go. If you don't, it's time to brush up on the basics of lawn care and gardening so you have something to offer.

As for the tools, you'll need the basic gardening tools in order to turn up, clean, cut and weed the lawn or garden. This will include a trimmer, edger, hedge clippers, shovel, rake, blower, a wheelbarrow or wagon. You will also need to invest in fertilizers and chemicals for treating the lawn. Probably the biggest investment you'll have to make is the lawn mower, a necessity for a more efficient service.

Getting your customers

In order to tell people about the lawn care services you offer, you'll have to prepare marketing and promotional materials. Flyers and brochures will do nicely, especially if they include details of your services and photographic samples of your previous work. You can also set up signs in your area to let people know about your business.

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Start offering your services around your neighborhood or area actively through phone calls or house visits. You could also set up your car or truck and have it painted with your business name and logo.

Another great way to attract more clients is to offer service packages that will fit all types of lawn care needs and budgets. When people see that they can choose from several options and don't have to be stuck on vague promises of single service, they will be more likely to hire you.

You can also team up with real estate companies and contractors. Many home constructions require lawn care services and your business may just be what they need. Better yet, this means a lot of jobs for your lawn care business, assuring you of a good income. If you do a great job, you can also take advantage of referrals or continuous business.

Profitability

There is a better chance for your lawn care business to flourish if you live in an area or have access to places that can make use of your skills. It also pays if you have contacts with home construction businesses and

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real estate contractors so you'll have more chances of promoting your lawn care business and getting hired.

Profitability will depend on the number of jobs you can do and how much you charge. If there are no other lawn care businesses to compete with, you can charge good rates. If there are others in your area, you will probably have to compete on prices. However, if you offer better services, you can still charge higher rates provided you show that your services are excellent. As for charging your clients, you can choose to either go for a lump sum or hourly rates.

Startup cost can range from about $500 to $3,000 depending on the kind of supplies and equipment you already have. On average, you'll probably make from $25 to about $45 per yard, more depending on the client, location and difficulty of the job.

If you want to have a good idea of how profitable your business is, take a look at your market, the number of competitors you have and the prevailing rates. If you take your rates and the number of jobs you work on and figure that against your expenses, you'll get a pretty good idea of how much your business will generate.

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You can also help make your lawn care business profitable by creating an efficient route. This ensures that you use your time and resources wisely. You will also have to compete, so keep yourself up-to-date about the latest trends, ideas, techniques and equipment concerning lawn care.

Becoming your own advertisement

This isn't a requirement, but if you do have a lawn of your own, it would pay if you could keep it well groomed and manicured. A nice looking lawn will serve as your very own upfront advertisement and will assure your potential customers of how far your lawn service skills can go.

REFERENCES and RESOURCES

More interesting information for the happy gardening family- – visit the following sites by RichardPresents.com -

HerbGardeningTips

How to design herb gardens for outdoors, patios, and even kitchen windowsills.

landscape-tips-for-homeowners

Includes sections on Large and Small Gardens, Iris Flower Beds, How to Grow Iris,

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Bonsai - The Chinese were the first to grow miniature-size trees in containers around 200 CE. This was how **herbal healers** transported medicinal plants.

Birds and Wildlife

Plant Gardens to attract Birds and Wildlife for enjoyable Bird Watching Pleasures

Butterfly Gardens

The beauty of a butterfly is enjoyed and appreciated - and set to poem and verse by many. These gorgeous Monarch, Viceroy, and dozens of other species of fluttering creatures flit about without a care in the world, and, much like us humans, all they want to find is a good place to eat, rest, and relax.

With wishes for a Green Thumb and happy hours in your gardens.

Richard Rossbauer

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