

YOUR LAWN

Tips On Managing Your Lawn Like A Pro

by Kyle Miller

(NAPSA)—Healthy lawns don't just happen. They require a plan. To maintain a healthy lawn, do what the lawn care pros do and develop a turf health care plan that includes proper mowing, watering, fertilizing and pest treatments. These fundamental steps are the foundation of an integrated health care plan for a beautiful, enjoyable lawn.

Mowing: Turf pros mow at least weekly. Frequent mowing minimizes leaf area removal, which creates less shock to turfgrass. It also helps grasses tiller, meaning new offspring plants grow next to parent plants, leading to a denser, healthier lawn.

Start by sharpening your mower blade and put it to work frequently. Dull blades tear turf, and turf damage makes grass tips more susceptible to disease and insects. Sharp blades make clean cuts, which heal quickly and are less prone to pests.

Watering: Watering is crucial for healthy lawns. Do it early in the morning for two smart reasons. First, 30 percent of watering during a hot day simply evaporates. Second, morning watering allows the sun to dry the tips of the blades, which reduces the amount of time the turfgrass foliage stays wet. That's good news, since diseases and insects are most destructive in moist plant material, so don't water at night when the top of the lawn will stay wet for many hours.

Fertilizing: Stimulate grass growth by applying a fertilizer when turfgrass is actively growing. Nutrients in fertilizer typically include nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium and levels of each, such as 5-10-20, appear on pack-



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aging. In this case, the 5-10-20 fertilizer would have 5 percent nitrogen, 10 percent phosphorus and 20 percent potassium.

A balanced fertilizer such as 5-10-20 promotes strong roots for the fall and winter months.

Treating for Pests: Plants—like people—can get sick. For example, grass can suffer from environmental stress that creates conditions for pest pressure. If lawn disease strikes, medication treatments in the form of pesticides are required to nurse the plant back to health.

To control weed pests, such as dandelions and clover, sedges and grassy weeds including crabgrass, treat your lawn with a pre-emergent herbicide. As the name implies, pre-emergent herbicides inhibit weed growth before weeds emerge.

If weeds emerge over time, treat them with a postemergent herbicide. Always consult specific pesticide product labels for restrictions, rates, use sites and safety information. Learn more at www.betterturf.basf.us.

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