

SPRING LAWN CARE – SIMPLIFIED

Dethatching: Thatch is made up of stems and roots that haven't composted and is found along the soil line. When it becomes more than $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thick, it should be removed. If it is less than $\frac{1}{2}$ " thick, it is fine and doesn't need to be removed. On small yards, if the thatch is 1" thick or less, it can usually be removed by using a hand rake. However, if the thatch is over 1" thick, it may be advisable to rent equipment or hire a yard professional. Fescue lawns (cool season grasses) usually do not need dethatching like Bermuda and Zoysia.

Aeration: Aeration is a process used to reduce the compaction of soil. Over the years of having a lawn in the same place, soil becomes compacted and the aeration process is needed. The process is the removal of soil in $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 inch diameter holes, approximately 2 inches deep. This is usually done by professionals. However, rental equipment is available if the homeowner desires to do it themselves. If the soil is heavily compacted, watering should be applied 2-4 days before aeration. A lawn mower can be used to chop up the cores of dirt and grass caused by aeration.

Fertilization: Fertilization rates and dates will vary depending on the type of grass. Bermuda grass should be fertilized from April after green-up through August. Fertilizing any later in the year will tend to promote disease. For fescues and rye grasses, fertilize in March, April and then in September and November. The fall fertilizations are the most important. Unless a soil sample shows that you need Phosphorus (P) or Potassium (K), fertilize with Nitrogen (N) only. The bag of fertilizer will show "0-0" on the end numbers (e.g. 22-0-0 or 33-0-0). Be sure to follow the instructions on the bag.

Watering: Watering is a very important part of lawn care. The irrigation of the grass should NOT be on a frequent, short time schedule because frequent, shallow watering may cause root problems. Infrequent and deep watering is preferred, averaging one to two inches per week depending on the type of grass and season. To determine if you are watering properly, dig down about 6" and check the wetness of the soil. If it is dry, simply increase in your watering times. A rain gauge may help in getting the proper amount of water on the lawn.

You may find the following Fact sheets helpful:

[HLA-6420 \(Lawn Management in Oklahoma\)](#)

[Bermuda Grass Maintenance Program](#)

[Fescue/Rye Maintenance Program](#)