

# Preparing Your Lawn for Spring

In early Spring many Alberta gardeners are anxious to get their grass cleaned up and looking good. While there are many steps you can take to groom your grass, it is crucial that it is done at the right time.

## Raking

Whether you are hand raking or power raking your grass, you must be sure it is dry enough. The way you can tell is by walking on it. If your footprints remain, then it's still too moist and raking will do more harm than good. Alternately, be sure to rake while the dormant grass is quite brown. Raking too late will harm healthy roots.

## Aerating

This is done to 'open' up the soil so it can accept water and fertilizer more readily. Aerating is most beneficial on grasses that are older than five years or have very compacted soil. Spring is a great time to aerate since so much moisture is available, but it can be done all season long.

## Fertilizing

In Spring, your lawn is struggling to recover from Winter, therefore a turf starter fertilizer is what will benefit it the most. Opt for slow release formulas with a higher amount of phosphorous (middle number) for root development such as Scott's Turf Builder 24-25-4. Alternately, an organic fertilizer such as Dr. Earth 9-0-5 contains alfalfa and beneficial microbes for a hardy root system.

Once the grass is green and growing (June onwards) you can apply a higher nitrogen, slow release fertilizer.



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## Thickening the Grass



One of the best way to thicken your grass is to 'top dress' it with high quality grass seed.

One your lawn has had a thorough spring raking, apply a thin layer of compost or bagged soil. Spread a thickening grass seed such as Golfgreen Quick Mix over lawn, then apply another thin layer of compost or soil on top. The soil helps anchor the seed and keep it moist, as well as prevent birds from eating it. Grass seed must be watered lightly every day until established. Depending on weather, it can take two to three weeks to germinate.

## Preventing Weeds

Top dressing your grass will thicken it, thereby preventing weed seed development. If possible, try to dig out weeds in the grass before they become mature and go to seed. If you are applying a selective herbicide such as Killex, be sure to only trigger the actively growing weeds as opposed to broadcasting the spray all over the grass.

## Dog Damage

Spring is also a great time to prevent and repair your lawn for dog damage. For more information, pick up our pamphlet on Repairing Dog Damage.

By following these steps, you can be assured your lawn will look better than ever this year.



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