

Natural Lawn Care

The foundation of successful natural lawn care is healthy soil, rich in beneficial micro-organisms and insects. This, in turn, promotes healthy turf. A beautiful 'green' lawn can be maintained with less labor by using the following methods:

1. Mow grass when it is 4 inches high and mow no shorter than 3 inches high – results in less weeds, healthier turf AND less frequent mowing. Letting grass get too tall before mowing results in shocked turfgrass that must recover. Mowing too short exposes ground to drying and encourages weed seeds to germinate.
2. Use a mulching lawn mower to cut clippings into fine pieces that stay on lawn and help to retain moisture and decompose to fertilize the turf.
3. Keep mower blades sharp for a clean cut that doesn't shred and weaken grass.
4. If watering a lawn, water deeply (one inch of water no more than once each week) in the early morning hours. Frequent short-duration watering discourages proper root development and encourages the development of thatch (dense, shallow roots in the top inch of soil). Watering in the evening leaves a lawn water-logged overnight and may promote the growth of fungus.
5. Allow your lawn to go dormant during hot dry summer weather by limiting watering. Lawn grass is a cool season plant, and mid-summer dormancy is natural and healthy (although we may not like the look).
6. If fertilizing lawn, apply fertilizers in mid-spring and autumn only, and use a low-nitrogen (less than 30%), slow-release form of fertilizer (Concern, Espoma, cottonseed meal, dried poultry waste, or compost).
7. Consider seeding in white clover to your lawn as a way to naturally boost the soil fertility (clover fixes nitrogen in the soil). Most lawn mixes used to include clover, but after the advent of broad-leaf pesticides, people got accustomed to seeing the perfect lawn as being grass only.
8. Natural weed control can be achieved by applying corn gluten meal in early spring and again in late summer at the rate of 20 lbs./1,000 sq. ft.
9. Be patient – 'green' lawn care doesn't produce results overnight. It may take a year or two to build your soil fertility and nurture a healthy lawn.

