

Maintaining Lawns

Tool & Material Checklist

Polyethylene Sheets
Garden Hose
Speedy Cultivator
Work Gloves
Hand Cleaner
Garden Hose Nozzle
Rotary Tiller

Tree Wrapping
Materials
Pruning Spray
Spading Fork
Lawn Rake
Lawn Seed
Pruning Shears

Peat Moss or Gypsum
Fertilizer
Broom Rake
Double-Duty Rake
Garden Cart or
Wheelbarrow

Seeding Your Lawn

It's best to seed your lawn in the fall, if possible. Of course, lawn seed can be sown at other times of the year, but fall is the ideal time for seeding to rejuvenate an existing lawn or to start a new one.

In most parts of the United States, an existing lawn should be reseeded in late August or early September. This gives the new grass seed time to grow during the cool fall days.

Before reseeding thin or bare spots, rake the lawn thoroughly with a broom rake. Use a heavy-duty broom rake with looped spring braces between the handle bar and spacer bar for this type of lawn raking. Broom rakes are available with either flat steel or wire teeth.

A multi-purpose rake (sometimes called a double-duty rake) may be ideal for removing a heavy build-up of thatch on your lawn. (Fig. 1) The rake's sharp teeth on one side will easily remove the thatch. The flanged teeth on the other side make it easy to pulverize the soil in preparation for reseeding.



Fig. 1
A multi-purpose rake is ideal for removing a heavy build-up of thatch.



Fig. 2
Loosen and pulverize the soil in all bare spots to form a good seed bed.



Fig. 3
Reseed the bare spots by hand.



Fig. 4
Cover the reseeded area with plastic sheets and secure them with small rocks, dirt or stakes.

After the lawn has been thoroughly thatched and raked, the thin and bare spots will be more easily visible.

Loosen the soil in any of the bare spots to a depth of about 1" or more with a speedy cultivator or some other type of handy soil-loosening tool (Fig. 2).

After loosening and pulverizing the soil in the bare spots, sprinkle the newly prepared area with the proper amount and type of lawn fertilizer. Then, rake it level.

If the bare spots have been compacted by heavy traffic, loosen the soil to a depth of about 6". Then, pulverize the soil and add a small amount of peat moss or gypsum to help keep it loose after the reseeding.

When the soil is thoroughly loosened and leveled, reseed with a top-quality seed. Select a grass seed mixture that is specially prepared for the type of location you are reseeding. For example, some seed mixtures work well in shady areas, while other mixtures are made for reseeding sunny areas. Ask a salesman in your local

retailer's lawn and garden department to help you select the correct seed.

Reseed the bare spots by hand (Fig. 3). Reseed the area sparingly – only about 6 seeds per square inch will survive. Sowing the seed too thickly simply wastes seed and money. After the seeds are sown, spray the area with a light mist of water.

Your new grass will get off to a much faster start if you cover the reseeded areas with clear sheets of polyethylene plastic. This covering keeps the moisture in the soil and eliminates the need for constant sprinkling. Secure the edges of the plastic sheet with small rocks, dirt or stakes (Fig. 4).

Take care to remove the polyethylene cover when the first seedlings appear. The cover helps the seeds until they germinate, but it will kill all seeds quickly unless it is removed when you see seedlings. After removing the cover, keep the soil moist by spraying it with a light mist two or three times a day until the grass is about 1" high. Continue to water newly seeded areas about once a week until the new grass is about 3" tall.

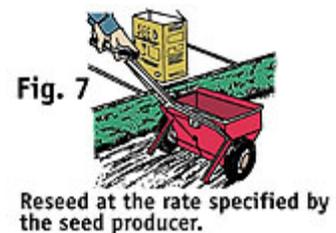
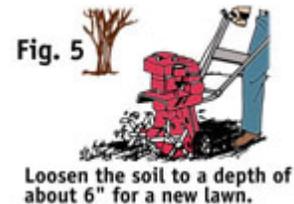
Starting a New Lawn

Sometimes it's necessary to start a totally new lawn or to completely rebuild large areas of an existing lawn. In these cases, prepare the seed bed with a rotary tiller or some other type of digging equipment (Fig. 5). Take time to prepare the soil thoroughly to a depth of about 6". If the soil is compacted, mix in peat moss or gypsum to keep it loose. This will help the roots of the new grass to survive.

Prepare the seed bed by raking it thoroughly and removing all stones, sticks, etc. Break up all dirt clods so the new seed will have a good chance to grow (Fig. 6).

Reseed the area with a mechanical seed spreader (Fig. 7). Reseed at the rate recommended on the package of seed you're using. In most cases, no raking is required after seeding, although certain types of seed need a light raking.

Lightly sprinkle the reseeded area two or three times a day if the reseeded area is done in hot weather (Fig. 8). Repeat this daily watering until the new seedlings are about 1" tall. After the new grass has reached this height, water it thoroughly about once each week until it's ready for the first mowing.



Planting Trees and Shrubs

Good grass is important, but it is only one element in a beautiful lawn. Grass can be enhanced by attractive trees, shrubs, flowers, etc. Although trees and shrubs are hearty plants, they must be planted correctly to survive.

The first step in planting trees and shrubs is to give them plenty of room (Fig. 9). Make the hole in which the tree or shrub is to be planted wide enough for the longest root to be laid into it without crowding. A rule of thumb is to make the hole in which the tree or shrub is to be set one-half again as large as the diameter of the roots of the plant.

You can save yourself considerable cleanup time by piling the soil dug from the hole onto canvas or plastic sheets. This also prevents the piled dirt from killing or damaging the grass around the hole.

It's a good idea to mix some peat moss into the soil when replacing it around the newly set plant or tree.

If the shrub or tree is in a container, dig the hole at least 2" deeper than the root in the container (Fig. 10). Loosen the soil below the root and add a small amount of plant food.

Remove the shrub or tree from the container and lower it into the hole. Refill the hole with thoroughly loosened soil. Then, form a mound with additional soil around the edge of the newly dug hole (Fig. 10). This provides a basin to hold water until the plant is thoroughly rooted in the new location.



Fig. 9
Give shrubbery and tree roots plenty of room.

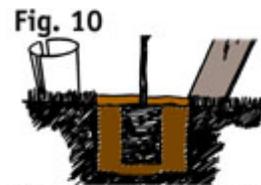


Fig. 10
Always dig the hole at least 2" deeper than the root length.



Fig. 11
Keep tree in an upright position with a spading fork while planting.



Fig. 12
Give the newly planted shrub plenty of water.



Fig. 13
Prune the shrub or tree with slanting cuts after planting.



Fig. 14
Protect the new plant by wrapping the body with a tree wrap.

If the tree or shrub is a bare-root plant, unwrap the roots of the tree after the hole is dug and place it in position. Hold the plant upright with a spading fork while you tamp the loose dirt around the roots (Fig. 11). Always set the shrub or tree about 2" lower in the ground than it was originally set before replanting.

Use plenty of water when resetting balled or bare-root plants (Fig. 12). Fill the basin around the tree and let the water soak in thoroughly. After one complete soaking, resoak it again.

Water is essential to a new shrub or tree in the first few days after replanting. Keep the hole wet during this period. Be sure to build up a basin arrangement to keep water on the plant for several days. Water your newly planted shrub or tree every week to 10 days during a dry spell.

After replanting the tree or shrub, trim it to the shape and size desired. Pruned limbs will heal faster if you make slanting cuts just above the bud (Fig. 13). Spray pruned areas with special pruning spray immediately after trimming to deter insects and disease organisms.

Protect the new plant against injury and disease by covering the lower part of the tree trunk with a tree wrap. Start the wrap just above the roots and a little below soil level. Continue wrapping to just below the lowest limb (Fig. 14). Hold them in position with cord.

Planting Rose Bushes

Plant your rose bushes in an area that receives a minimum of six hours of sunshine each day. Dig the hole for planting large enough to give the roots plenty of room (Fig. 17).

It may be wise to add peat moss or some form of compost to the dirt in the hole before planting the rose. Sand should also be added if the soil is extremely moist.

Examine the roots carefully after the plant is placed in the hole (Fig. 18). Trim back dead or broken roots with a hand pruner.

Use top soil to form a cone in the bottom of the hole where the rose bush is to be planted. Spread the rose roots evenly over this cone. Again, make sure the hole is large enough to provide adequate room for all rose roots.

Set the rose bush at the proper depth. Most healthy rose bushes have three strong shoots coming up from the root system (Fig. 19). Cover the knot just below these three shoots to a depth of 1".

Pack the soil firmly around the roots of the rose bush (Fig. 20). Fill the hole with water and allow it to soak in. Then, refill the hole again.

Prune the rose bush after planting (Fig. 21). Prune hybrid tea roses back to lengths of about 6" to 8". Trim floribundas to lengths of approximately 4" to 6". Spray all pruned areas with a special pruning paint to prevent damage from insects and disease. Build a mound around the newly planted rose bush with loose soil of top grade.



Fig. 17
When planting rose bushes, dig the hole large enough and deep enough for the roots.



Fig. 18
Give rose roots plenty of room.



Fig. 19
Set the rose bush at the proper depth.



Fig. 20
Pack the soil firmly around the roots of the rose bush.



Fig. 21
Prune the rose bush after planting.