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How to Have the Best Backyard on the Block: Grass and Landscaping Solutions

All Grasses Are Not Created Equal: How to Know Which Grass is Best for Your Lawn

There are many types of grasses used for green lawns; do you know which grass is best for your lawn? The key to great looking green lawn is lawn fertilizers and weed control as well as using the right type of grass seed. Most lawns are made up of many different types of grass seed and yours might need different seed in different areas. Mowing is an important ingredient to having a great looking lawn as well.

Let's look at the type of grass that is best for your yard. One of the first factors is to decide what zone you are in. There is a difference between the cool season zone and the warm season zone. Warm season grasses are used best in the southern states in the United States and the cool season grasses are used in the North as well as Canada. You may well be found in the middle of these two zones; in that case, you can contact your local county extension to ask which types of grass are best for your zone.

Warm season grasses are:

- Bermudagrass
- Buffalograss
- Zoysiagrass

These are the most common grasses used in the warm season zone.

Cool season grasses include:

- Bentgrasses
- Bluegrasses
- Fescues
- Ryegrasses

The grasses can be mixed in your lawn to take advantage of the strength of the various types of grasses. One of the items you may need to consider is if your lawn has shady spots. Along with that, spaces in your yard that have at one time been covered by pine tree branches or have heavy foot traffic deserve special attention.

You may also be in a region that often is affected by drought. For shaded spots, some of the cool season grasses such as bentgrass and bluegrass may be the answer to your problem. In areas of heavy traffic, try the sturdy Kentucky bluegrass. Some new strains of Kentucky bluegrass are also specially designed to be drought tolerant.

Red fescue is used to keep the lawn together and show a tighter appearance. It is fine leaved and can stand close mowing. Especially good for cool zones, it is strong and durable. Meadowgrass is an excellent choice for regions that are prone to drought conditions. It has a beautiful dark green color and has a good resistance to fungus diseases. Bentgrass provides a good base to a lawn and by over seeding can give you an attractive tight looking lawn. Ryegrass has a newly developed strain that stays green all year and has great wear tolerance.

Here are some recommendations of grasses for different parts of the country. Kentucky bluegrass still seems to be the favorite grass for the Rocky Mountain and Plains states. Bluegrass varieties that need minimal maintenance are; Belmont, Caliber, Cobalt, Monopoly, and Unique. Kentucky bluegrass needs to be watered often, as the roots don't grow deep and is an excellent choice for sports fields and for parks. It likes to be mowed to a height of about two inches.

The grass recommended for the Northeast and Midwest is a good fescue. This grass grows slowly, has wiry blades, and has a height of only six inches. Lots of shade and moisture requires a hardy perennial relative of bluegrass called Poa supine.

The Southeast has a grass called centipede grass. The grass is light colored, grows slowly, and requires less maintenance than other warm season grasses.

Sources say that grass is hard to grow in the Southwest. A popular grass is regular Zoysia. It turns brown in October and stays brown through March. Zoysia loves the warm weather, turns brown if the temperature gets below 55 degrees, and loves to be cut short. This grass is not a good grass to use in areas that get a full-blown winter.

In the great Northwest, bent grasses are well adapted to the climate of that area. They do tend to be high maintenance but there are strains that have been developed for cool areas and are also low maintenance such as Velvet bentgrass. Ryegrass is also a good choice for cooler weather climates. You can use annual ryegrass for a quick fix on a lawn or you can choose perennial ryegrass for keeping your grass year after year.

A Wonderful Backyard Landscaping Idea

A good backyard landscaping idea is one that everyone can make use of. There are many different backyard landscaping ideas and most of them are pretty good but to find the one that is right for you and that is just what your yard needs may take some reading. This article will help you to find the perfect backyard landscaping idea for your home.

A good backyard landscaping idea is to use evergreens. The use of these fabulous trees will do o much for any yard. They will add a stately nature to the feel of your home while keeping it welcoming and warm. Many people like to use deciduous trees in the yard and this is always a good idea but it is the evergreens that will give the yard the structure and the stability that it needs for a good backyard landscaping idea and design.

You need to look for a backyard landscaping idea like the one above that will benefit you all year round. Deciduous trees will not be gorgeous in all seasons, most perhaps, but not all. Evergreens on the other hand are always fantastic and they look as beautiful in the winter as they do in the summer and this is why they make for such a great backyard landscaping idea. The key to any great landscaping design is to find a backyard landscaping idea like this that will keep your yard interesting no matter what time of the year it is.

Another good backyard landscaping idea is to use hardscape. This is the use of things like rocks, fences and walls. These can make your yard look very interesting during all of the seasons. You can have climbing plants on it in the summer and spring and pretty trees around it that will look great in the winter. When looking for a good backyard landscaping idea you need to look for other options besides just plants. There is much more to landscaping than just plants and trees.

Walls and fences can frame your property beautifully and using them is such a great backyard landscaping idea because they will just accent all of your other wonderful backyard landscaping ideas. They will frame your yard as a picture frame frames a gorgeous painting. Look at this kind of backyard landscaping idea as well in your search for the one.

Backyard Landscaping is About Many Different Things

Your backyard landscaping is going to have to be about many different things but the most important one of these is your wellbeing. Most people get into backyard landscaping because they want to change the look and feel of their home, they want to make it a wonderful place where their family can feel safe and comfortable at all times. Backyard landscaping is a great way to add some more peace to your life whether you are alone or you have a large family and tons of kids. You will be able to create a sanctuary with your backyard landscaping that you have never had before in your life.

Backyard landscaping does not have to be drastic or hard. You can do your own backyard landscaping or you can hire a contractor to do it all for you. The choice is yours but doing it yourself can be a lot of work, especially if you do not have any experience in this type of thing. There are all kinds of things that you will need to learn about before you start doing your own backyard landscaping.

You will have to take a crash course in landscaping and this course will be jammed packed with all kinds of info that you never even knew was out there. You may be able to save some money on the work if you do your own backyard landscaping but if you screw things up too badly you may end up paying even more to get everything fixed.

If you want to get some backyard landscaping done you should only do it yourself if it is going to be a simple and straightforward job. If you need irrigation things dealt with and planes and elevations leave it to the professionals that do it for a living. These things may be over your head entirely. You need to watch out how you go about your backyard landscaping or you could end up with quite a mess on your hands.

There are a couple of great places for you to learn some more about backyard landscaping such as the local public library and the Internet. You can get many backyard landscaping books out of the library and these will help you to make the best decisions as to your landscaping needs. You can also get many do it yourself tips online.

Backyard Landscaping

Back yard landscaping is an exciting hobby for many people. You can make any backyard an enjoyable and relaxing getaway for the whole family. This can be your place for peace and quite or maybe a fun spot to enjoy with the kids after a long day. No matter what you use your backyard for; there are dozens of landscaping ideas to choose from when it comes to making it your personal space.

Creative ideas anyone can do

If you are looking for something to make your backyard pop out and reflect your personality, then go for it! If you are looking for a fun and wild spot to spend time with friends and family in, then what a better place than your backyard? Go for vibrant wildflowers and decorative landscaping materials. If you are designing a new patio, choose fun colors for the tiles or stones on the floor. Add special touches to your backyard to give it your personal touch.

Themes

There are so many different themes that you can go with for your backyard. If you are dreaming of a tropical getaway, line your backyard with fruit trees, and coordinating flowers. Put a hammock between two trees and swing in the warm summer breeze. Throw some candles around your patio and some tropical throw rugs on the floor. You will be surprised what props can do to add feeling and warmth.

Romantic Themes

If you want to go back to your honeymoon days, just go to the backyard. Put in a privacy fence and maybe a Jacuzzi or hot tub. Add in some soft colors and sweet smelling candles and you have a honeymoon getaway in your own backyard. Add in some exotic flowers to your design to give your backyard some tropical accents.

Family Friendly Backyard

If you are someone who wants to use your backyard for the family and friends to come over and enjoy barbeques and spend time together, then there are many choices for you. Extending your patio will give you more entertaining space and more room for extra seating at dinnertime. You may even consider adding a roof to your patio. This will allow you to enjoy the outdoors even when the weather is not so nice.

A great way to get the whole family in on the backyard landscaping is to plant trees or flowers together. Have the kids help with the flowers. Let them each choose a special flower or even a

tree and let them plant them in a special place. This is a great way to create memories and a family backyard at the same time.

A great backyard-landscaping project can be done in one or two weekends. Make it special and make it reflect your own personality to create your own sanctuary and getaway from the rest of the world.

Bermuda Baby! Five Reasons to go for Bermuda Grass

If you are going to be seeding a lawn, you will be taking into account the climate in which you live for choosing your grass seed. If you live somewhere that it is really hot and sunny, then you will want to choose a warm season grass. A perfect choice for such climates is Bermuda grass, which is bred for just such climates. There are actually five reasons you should consider planting Bermuda grass.

First of all, starting a lawn or filling in dead spots in a lawn can be a real challenge, especially if you have pets. Bermuda grass is actually a very quick growing breed of grass. In addition, it grows with great vigor and density. When you are trying to start a lawn or fill in bare spots, quick and vigorous growth is exactly what you are after. In fact, if you don't edge your Bermuda grass properly it will even grow into flowerbeds and other places you may not want it to grow.

Secondly, Bermuda grass produces a dense turf with fine texture. That makes it perfect for a yard where you are going to have children playing or pets roaming. Bermuda grass has fine texture and gives a soft surface for your family to enjoy. It is a great grass for most any lawn in any hot weather area, especially for family and pets. Because of this, your Bermuda grass lawn will rarely have weed problems. You will likely want to apply a crabgrass prevention formula on your lawn a couple of times a year, but it is rarely a problem with Bermuda.

Third, Bermuda grass is very wear-resistant. The turf produced with Bermuda grass is one that can endure a lot, which makes it fairly low maintenance. It is a popular breed of grass for use on golf courses since it is so durable and resilient. It can also be found being used on soccer, football, and baseball fields as well. It can and should be cut fairly short, which also makes a great grass for keeping in manicured condition.

Fourth, Bermuda is great in heat and drought conditions. During times of low water production or high heat, it is a hardy grass that will survive most of the time. Even to keep it at its best, you need only to give your Bermuda grass lawn around two inches of water per week. That is another reason that it is so commonly used with golf courses and on athletic fields of all kinds. Hot climates are prone to drought and high heat, so Bermuda grass is the perfect choice for you if that is the type of climate in which you live.

Fifth is a culmination of all the other reasons, but that makes it as important as any: Bermuda is low maintenance. It grows quickly, so once you seed it you only have to keep up a daily watering regimen for a short time. Bermuda grows thick and fine turf that makes it hardy and able to withstand a lot of use by children, pets, and the entire family. Also, Bermuda grass can

withstand drought conditions very well. On top of it all, is the fact that it will go dormant in winter so that even living in a hot climate you will not have to mow your lawn 12 months a year. Overall, it is a great grass for your lawn, golf course, athletic field, or really anywhere you want covered by lawn grass in a warm environment.

You should be aware that there are a couple of minor drawbacks to having Bermuda grass in your lawn, though they are far outweighed by the positives. As mentioned before, it can grow into your garden or flower bed if you do not edge it well. Also, it should be mowed fairly often to be kept at around one half inch in length. It also needs full sun, so if you have a shady yard, it is not for you. Lastly, you will have to remove thatch regularly when dealing with Bermuda grass.

Growing and caring for a yard can be a real prideful thing. If you live in a warm climate and want a lawn with a hardy tough reputation, Bermuda grass is going to be your best bet. Take a page from the golf course and baseball field management teams and plant Bermuda grass in your hot sunny climate.

Blade Basics in Both Your Lawn and Mower

Cutting your lawn is one of the most important parts of maintaining a lawn. However, in order to prevent extra maintenance of your lawn, it's important to remember that there are certain maintenance tips with both the lawn as well as the lawn mower blades. By remembering certain things about your lawn mower blade, as well as knowing when to care for the lawn blades, you will be able to have an easier time with maintaining the look of your lawn.

One of the things that must be done in order for your lawn mower to be the most effective is by continuously sharpening the blades before you mow the lawn. Before you sharpen the blades, you should clean the blade with a wire brush. By doing this, it will be easier to sharpen the blades evenly. The blades can be sharpened by a grinding wheel and a file.

It's important to keep the blades all sharpened evenly, so they will be able to cut the grass evenly. You can tell if the blade is off balance by hanging it. If one side of the blade is leaning, then it needs to be balanced more through the sharpening. If the blade is not balanced, it can cause the crankshaft to be damaged, which will eventually ruin the engine.

The blade may also need to be replaced at certain times, in order to keep the blades working properly. It is recommended that the blade of the lawn mower be replaced at the beginning of every year. This is not only to keep the blade sharp, but also to make sure that it does not rust. If the grass clippings were wet at one time, or got stuck to the blade, then the blade can become bad quickly.

You may also need to replace the blade if it has hit a rock or branch on your lawn, as this can cause dents or nicks in the blade, causing an uneven cut. To replace the blade in your lawn mower, make sure to empty the gas and oil from the lawn mower first, then take the blade off and replace it. Many will replace the blade before beginning a new season of mowing, making it easier to replace the blade.

One thing that may happen if you don't sharpen or replace your lawn mower consistently is that it will tear the grass instead of cutting it evenly. The blades, instead of cutting, will get stuck in the grass and the dirt. This will cause more problems for the grass as well as for the mower in maintaining the grass.

The grass may also come off in clumps instead of by the blades. It is also known that if you don't sharpen the blades, it may cause diseases to spread over the grass, as the rip from the grass will cause the grass to not be as protected from the diseases. Your grass will not only be cut unevenly, but it may cause further problems with the grass remaining green and alive during the summer season.

When you are mowing, you should always know how much of the blade of grass to take off. It is known that you should never take off more than an inch from the blade of grass, as this will cause extra stress from the grass. The proper nutrients will also not be able to be received through the grass.

Another part of the lawn blades to keep in mind when mowing is what to do with the grass clippings after you have mowed your lawn. Some of the clippings can go back on the lawn, as this will provide protection as well as extra nutrients to the soil. However, it is better if most of the grass clippings are thrown out as it can prevent water and nutrients from going into the soil of the grass.

By knowing how to care for the lawn, as well as taking care of the blade in your lawn mower, you will be able to have a healthier lawn that is able to cut more evenly. You will also be able to prevent problems with your lawn mower that may be caused from the wrong blade being used. Maintenance to your lawn mower as well as your lawn will help with a healthier lawn, and more efficient lawn mower.

Burn Baby Burn: How to Treat Your Sun Scorched Lawn

Try as hard as you might to avoid it, your lawn may end up sun scorched for one reason or another. Though you can try to prevent scorching through proper maintenance and drainage, there are also some simple ways to cure this problem once it occurs.

Scorching occurs when your grass turns brown due to the sun and heat. During dry and drought periods during the summer, grass is more likely to be damaged. Reductions or restrictions on water usage can also make it more likely that your grass will be scorched. New sod can be particularly prone to damage.

This is a particular problem if you are not watering the new sod as often as it needs. Watering often will help establish its root system underground. Your lawn can also be burned by the use or overuse of some pesticides or improperly applied fertilizers.

To avoid scorching, consistent watering is important. Water can also be the best cure for the sun-scorched lawn. If your grass is scorched and not dead, then water alone might be able to revive it back to its former state. When you water, you want to make sure that you water

deeply, letting the water soak in at least six inches deep. If you are only doing shallow watering the roots come much closer to the surface and are more prone to damage by extreme heat and cold because they are much more exposed.

You may also consider adding sugar to your grass. Silly as this might sound it will benefit the organism and microbes and help enrich your soil. You should spread one pound of sugar for every three hundred square feet on your lawn. What you want to avoid is using a lot of fertilizer or weed killer. These kill the microbes that are beneficial to your grass and which you'll need to get it back to the green color you love. Adding sugar will free those microbes and keep them alive.

If the sun scorching has killed areas of your grass, then you can fill or plug those bare spots with sod. This will be less expensive than replanting your entire lawn. You can remove the dead sections and then add new sod to those sections or depending on the season when doing this; you can start to re-grow your grass with grass seed.

Be warned though: grass seed can be tricky at the best of times and you may end up with a very patchy looking lawn. New sod may be expensive, but if you are only using little patches of it to fill in dead spots on your lawn, it won't set you back too much.

In a worst-case scenario, you will have to re-sod or re-seed your entire lawn. As daunting as this might sound, it is sometimes the only solution, particularly if the damage is extensive. If you do need to do this, then you need to make sure that you look after your newly planted grass in the manner required to prevent the damage from reoccurring. The last thing you want is to start an unending cycle of seeding, scorching and re-seeding.

The sun can do a great deal of damage to your lawn, but so can fertilizers and weed killers that have been improperly applied. When looking at applying fertilizer, you must read the directions carefully and only apply it at the right time of the year. Using certain products in the summer will burn your lawn, even though they may be fine to use at other times.

The best solution (again) is watering, but you might also consider applying activated charcoal to your grass. This can detoxify your grass and reverse the effects of improperly applied weed and feed. If the damage is too extensive then your only option will be to re-sod or seed to bring the grass back to what it once was.

When dealing with a sun-scorched or burned lawn, the most important thing is to give your lawn the love and care it needs. A little TLC will help prevent sun scorching and it will also help cure it. If your lawn is sun-scorched then water is really your best friend and will really help in returning your lawn to it former green glory.

Don't Get Crabby: How to Banish That Pesky Crab Grass in Your Lawn

Crab grass thrives in hot and dry conditions and is an annual grass that sprouts roots at the nodes and crowds out the grass your really want in your lawn. Its roots are shallow and the leaves are course textured. Crabgrass often has a different color than grass and will stand out

in an otherwise perfect lawn. It makes the lawn look uneven and the weeds can turn brown while the grass around it remains green.

It eventually flowers with spiked seed heads coming from the center of the plants. They produce many seeds and those seeds will be germinating in the spring to give your lawn even more grief. Weak spots in your lawn are especially vulnerable to crabgrass. The areas most susceptible are areas that are next to pavements and heavily used areas. Crabgrass is nearly impossible to get rid of entirely but there are things you can do to keep it from overtaking your lawn.

You can hoe or dig out the crab grass leaving the roots exposed so they dry out and die, or you can maintain a good thick lawn to keep crabgrass from taking hold. The lawn should be well fertilized, well watered and you will not want to cut the grass too short. Cutting the grass too short will weaken your lawn base and allow crabgrass and other weeds to attack your lawn. Crabgrass will die in the fall with the first frost, but if it was allowed to seed, you will need to apply crab grass killer that will prevent it from germinating in the spring.

Here are a few tips on controlling that annoying crab grass in your lawn. As stated above it is hard for crabgrass to get a toehold in your yard if your lawn is healthy. Without sunlight, the crabgrass can't take root. Try to remove crabgrass as soon as you see it. One little sprig of crabgrass can quickly turn into a large patch because it is so fertile.

Cutting your lawn too short will allow the sunlight to reach sprigs of crabgrass as it will take advantage of the sunlight and spread quickly. Lawns should be cut to a height of between two and one half to three inches. Mowing and grass length seems to have a great deal to do with a healthy lawn. Keep your lawn mower blades sharp.

Before you try to remove the crabgrass, water the area heavily. This will help loosen the soil and make removal easier. Make sure you get the entire root. Roots will grow wherever roots touch the soil. Once you have removed the crabgrass, mulch the soil. This helps any left over roots from taking hold and causing problems later.

Using chemicals should be a last resort. You won't be able to find an herbicide that only kills crabgrass. That means that other plants will be vulnerable to any type of chemical treatment you apply to the crabgrass. There are chemicals that are pre-emergent but it's hard to predict when to apply it. If you apply too early the effects can fade and the weed can appear later. If you wait and apply the chemical too late, then the crabgrass can already have taken hold. Always use gloves when using any sort of chemicals as gloves will also protect your hands from calluses caused by pulling weeds and gardening.

One of the easiest ways to keep crabgrass out of your lawn is by using Zoysia grass. This grass grows into a thick heavy ground cover and virtually chokes out weeds. Zoysia grass is not a good grass to use in some climates and you should check to see what is recommended for your climate zone.

Crabgrass is very hard to get rid of, so be patient and diligent. Crabgrass can spring up seemingly out of nowhere. Be firm, mow with a sharp blade, feed your lawn with a good fertilizer, and reseed bad parts of your lawn. Remember, reseeding helps keep your lawn

healthy and will not allow weeds to take hold. Keep an eye on your lawn; even if it means getting down to weed level, you can control the dreaded crabgrass weed.

Don't Get Cut Short! Three Rules for Mowing Your Lawn

Mowing your lawn is one of the most basic homeowner chores you may have. Believe it or not, though, there are some things you need to keep in mind when it comes to properly mowing your lawn. Mowing is not just about keeping your lawn looking nice, but also about keeping your grass healthy.

In order to make sure that you are able to follow the rules, first make certain that your lawn mower is ready. Blades should be kept sharp. Also, riding mowers should have all tires filled equally to insure a level mower, and push mowers should have all wheels set at the same height. Once you have your mower ready, you can effectively mow your lawn. By following three very simple, yet often ignored, rules in mowing your lawn, you can insure that your grass will be healthy and look spectacular.

First of all, whenever possible, you should mulch your grass or have the clippings spread through the grass. Clipped grass is a natural nutrient for your lawn as they decompose naturally. In fact, mulching your lawn properly can equate to as many as three fertilizer treatments in a year.

To put it more simply, mulching allows you to spread compost on your lawn without a compost pile. When the clippings are pushed down in between the grass blades, they begin to decompose in the soil. In effect, compost is created right on your lawn, which completely eliminates the need for compost piles. Also, a proper layer of mulch on the lawn will prevent water loss. If you mulch, rather than bagging the clippings, you will find that you need to water less in order to have a nice looking and healthy lawn.

The second rule is to make sure you vary the pattern in which you mow the lawn. In general, homeowners are not ones to take note of mowing pattern. Patterns are seen in the grasses of golf courses, baseball fields, and football facilities. However, the variation in mowing pattern is about more than just fancy design and aesthetics; it actually helps your lawn stay its healthiest.

By changing the pattern in which you mow every 2 to 3 weeks, you will keep the wheels of your mower hitting in new locations and allow the blades to hit the grass at varying angles throughout the year. The grass will, then, grow straighter and will not begin to show the ruts and indentations that can come with mowing monotony. Above all, varying the direction of your mowing pattern will allow your grass to grow naturally and with a healthy, groomed appearance that will effectively keep you looking your suburban best.

The third lawn mowing rule is that you should keep your mower in prime condition. First of all, make sure you are mowing at the right height. To keep a healthy lawn, you should mow it so that the blades are at least a 2-3 inches in length. The extra length will help your lawn to look fuller and to feel softer. Also, longer grass requires less water to stay healthy.

The blades will keep each other shaded from the sun and from drying out. Also keep your blades sharp. Dull blades on a lawn mower will cause damage to the individual blades. In addition, you will get incomplete cutting so that you will have blades of varying heights sticking up above your cut line. Your lawn will end up looking frazzled and rough.

Proper lawn care is important. A nice lawn adds to the look and even to the value of your home and even your neighborhood. In addition, it gives you and your family a lush and beautiful place to enjoy the outdoors around your very own home. Though creating and maintaining a nice looking lawn can be a little intimidating, it doesn't have to be difficult.

One of the most routine and simple things you will do with your lawn is to mow it. Mowing your lawn properly can play a big part in keeping it healthy and looking its very best if you take the time to follow the three simple rules. Just remember to always mulch, keep your mowing pattern varied every couple of weeks, and maintain your mower for blade sharpness and thickness of cut you will find that your lawn will almost take care of itself.

How Low Can You Go? Why Cutting Your Lawn Short is Hazardous for its Health

Cutting your lawn, and understanding the science behind when and how to cut your grass is one of the important parts to maintenance for your lawn. Cutting at the right time and knowing the right length to cut can help with several things in your lawn, while not doing this can cause more problems and maintenance than was expected.

It is said that you should allow the grass to stay at an average of two to two and a half inches. When you mow, you should only remove the top third of the blade. When your grass is a little over three inches high to three and a half inches at most, is the best time to mow your grass. You can either estimate these heights, or you can set your lawn mower to be able to cut this much. There are special made lawnmowers that will help to determine the length in which you should cut your grass with.

The measurements that have been made for cutting grass have been averaged out for several reasons. The main purpose of this is that allowing this much length in your grass allows nutrients to continue to move through each blade. When the blades of grass are growing, they take a certain amount of soil, water and sun in order to grow properly. When you cut the tips of this off, they have to adjust how much of the nutrients they should continue to get. If this change is too drastic, it will cause problems with the grass.

This moves into the second reason as why you should not cut the blades of grass too short. Because of the change in size and nutrients, cutting blades too short will stress out the plants. This is because they have to adjust to the different length. The second type of stress that they receive from the shorter blades is if the weather is hotter, the blades will not have enough protection provided from the length that they once had. Too much of a difference in blade length can then cause problems by either causing brown patches, wilting, or grass burn.

A third reason why it is always good to only cut this much off, and consistently, is because each time you cut your grass, it grows back thicker and faster. If you only cut the grass by a third, it will continue to be able to receive the same amount of nutrients and sun. By doing this, it will be able to grow back at a faster pace, turning even more green and filling out space more than it did before.

On the maintenance side, you won't have to remove as many grass clippings when you don't cut as much off. It is known to be healthy to leave some of the grass clippings that you have cut on the grass, as this provides more nutrients as well as protection to the growth of the other grass blades. With this in mind, if you leave too many grass clippings, it will take away the sunlight and water that the plants are supposed to be receiving.

Another thing to keep in mind is that the grass should not be mowed when the grass is wet. This causes a spreading of diseases, as the dampness that is on the blades of grass cannot be evaporated, and eventually begins to mold or turn into a disease. Mowing with wet grass may also cause you to slip and injure yourself. The best time to mow a lawn is in the early evening. This will prevent the grass from getting stressed. The sun in the afternoon usually stresses out the grass and the mowing in the afternoon will only add to this.

Grass should always remain at a length between two and three inches. When it begins to move past three inches is the best time to mow the grass. Beyond this, you should never take off more than one third of the blade. If grass is not mowed at the right height, it can cause problems with stress, nutrients, and diseases spreading throughout your lawn. By cutting your grass at the right height, and mowing when it is about three inches tall, you will not only keep your lawn healthy, but you will also provide a better looking, greener lawn.

Lawn Cutting is an Art Form: How to Cut Your Lawn Properly

I bet you don't think of mowing your yard as an art form. A chore has to be done if you have any lawn at all. It takes about 30 minutes to mow your patch of lawn, and most likely you don't consider it a form of art. To have a healthy, hearty growing lawn, you do need how to cut your lawn properly. Lawn mowing can give you a great workout, be relaxing and gives you a good feeling when your lawn is freshly mowed and looking neat and tidy.

When do you mow? That seems like a simple question but if you've been following the same mowing, routine you may not have thought about it. You should never mow when your lawn is wet. Grass doesn't bag or mulch properly and it can cause clumping of the lawn. Schedule your lawn mowing for late afternoon or evening, not only will it be cooler but also it will have had plenty of time to dry from the morning dew or after early morning watering.

Another drawback to mowing while damp is that it can spread lawn fungus very quickly. You can do the same thing when the lawn is dry but is much more likely to happen when mowing a wet lawn.

You don't have to mow every Saturday. Some grasses will flourish during the summer months and may need to be mowed every 3-4 days. On the other hand, if there has been little rainfall,

you may not need to mow more than once a month. Grass has its peak-growing season and you will need to adapt your lawn-mowing schedule to your grass. Sorry, your grass will not make any concessions for you!

What happens if you have been away from home and your lawn is overgrown when you return home? The worst possible thing you could do is to get out the mower and cut it down to the standard height you normally mow it to. What you should do is to mow one third of the height at a time. If your lawn is overgrown by more than six inches, cut two inches off and let the lawn mower set for a couple of days. This will allow your lawn to recover before you bring it out and cut it again. If you do cut it too short, watch closely for weeds and give it plenty of water. Weeds will crop up fast in a scalped lawn.

Do you mow your lawn in the same pattern and direction every time? If you do, you could be creating streaks and striped lines that will grow back irregularly and look bad. It is recommended to change your mowing direction each time you mow. One time go side to side, the next time go from top to bottom. This cross cutting will help your lawn to grow and won't be matted or trampled in the same place each time you mow.

Should you bag or mulch? That's another good question. You will need to have a lawn mower that will mulch with plenty of horsepower to cut and essentially re-cut the grass to drop back into the lawn. Clippings are a perfectly balanced, slow release, non-chemical lawn fertilizer. Best of all, it will reduce your need for fertilizer by 50 percent and its free and natural.

Mulching your lawn does increase the development of thatch in your lawn. Thatch build up is harmful to your lawn as well. Make sure that your blades are sharp. Try to sharpen them at least two times during the mowing season. This will keep your mulching mower working more efficiently. If you aren't keeping your blades sharp, then you are tearing the blades of grass and not cutting them. That will cause your lawn to look ragged and increase its susceptibility to disease.

If you notice thatch is building up you may want to bag your clippings occasionally. Mulching is recommended during heat waves, after fertilization and during times of drought. It will provide the soil with increased cover to hold in what moisture it does receive. Clippings can contain as much as 80% water and 5% nitrogen with other nutrients found in small quantities and will be continually fertilizing your lawn.

Mow Power: Five Tips in Choosing the Perfect Mower for that Perfect Lawn

Mowing your lawn can often be a hard task if you don't have the right equipment. By finding the right kind of lawn mower, you can easily cut your grass easier, and allow for a better cut of your lawn. By considering several different factors of your lawn, as well as from the equipment, you will be able to get a better cut and healthier grass. Here are some things to consider when finding the right kind of lawn mower.

1. Consider the shape of your yard. If you are cutting grass on a slope, it is best to find a lawn mower that will be able to move easily on uneven surfaces. There are some lawn mowers that are made with the wheels at a level of twelve inches, instead of the regular height for even surfaces, making it easier to move up and down slopes, without cutting the grass unevenly. If your yard is completely even, then the shape of the wheels as well as the mower should also be considered.

2. Environmental factors. One thing to consider with your lawn mower is how it will effect the environment. Several normal lawn mowers pollute the air with their use of gas. The gas may also cause a mess where it is being poured into the mower. Having a gas mower not only causes pollutants to go in the air, but may cause problems with aeration in the lawn. If this is a concern, then there are different types of lawn mower that won't cause pollutants or messes with gas.

Reel lawn mowers are one option that is available for those who want to be environment friendly. These are usually cheaper than regular lawn mowers, and don't use a motor to mow the lawn. There are also self-propelled lawn mowers that will make it easier to cut the lawn, and also allow for a more even cut. However, these types of mowers won't allow you to chop larger debris, such as branches.

3. Cords that are connected to lawn mowers. Several lawn mowers will limit how you can move through your yard because they require cords. If you have a large yard, then you might consider getting a cordless lawn mower, or a reel lawn mower. This will save you time by allowing you to move around your lawn freely, without having to step over the cord and change your position when mowing your lawn. If you have a larger lawn, this is one thing to consider. You may also consider getting a lawn tractor in order to move through larger spaces.

4. Knowing where to put grass clippings. When you mow, you will be left with grass clippings through your yard. One thing to consider with the perfect mower is how you want to handle grass clippings. Several lawn mowers will come with a bag so that the grass clippings won't move onto your lawn.

There are also mulching lawn mowers, which will cut the grass clippings into smaller pieces before they go back onto your lawn, making it so that the clippings don't prevent aeration or nutrients from water to move into the soil. If you don't have these clippings taken care of through the mower, you will most likely need to pick them up after you mow.

5. Finding the Right Cut for your Grass. It is suggested that you cut your grass when it is about three to three and a half inches in height and that you don't cut it down more than one inch. Certain lawn mowers will allow you to pre-measure how much it will cut allowing for an even cut that won't be too long or short when you are finished. If you don't want to measure how much you will be cutting from your lawn, finding a lawn mower that will measure for you is one thing to consider.

When considering a lawn mower, there are several different factors to consider. The right equipment will help with your grass, allowing for less maintenance or other problems to occur when mowing your lawn. By finding the right lawn mower, you will be able to cut your grass easily, leaving an even cut and healthier grass.

Stay Sharp: Proper Mower Maintenance for a Lush Lawn

When cutting your lawn, there are some different steps that can be taken with your lawnmower in order to allow the proper maintenance and care. This will help your lawnmower to stay new for a longer time. It will also help your grass to look better, as the cut from the mower will be more even and won't rip.

The first thing to consider with the proper lawn mower for your lawn is what type of mower will be best for your grass. This can be determined by whether your lawn is on a slope or flat ground, what type of machine would have the easiest type of maintenance, and what type of environment you are in.

If you have to cut grass on a slope, the best type of lawn mower is one with high wheels. This will make it easier to push up a hill, or to move back down the hill with. The second type of lawn mower that is available is a cordless or electric mulching lawn mower. This doesn't have gas, making it less messy to mow with. It also helps with mulching on your lawn. The third type of lawn mower that can be used is a reel lawn mower. These are said to be more environmental friendly, not contributing to pollution and are easier to mow with.

Beyond deciding which is the right type of lawn mower to use, is the maintenance, which it receives. This will not only allow the mower to last longer, but will also give your grass a better cut. Every spring, the different parts of the lawnmower should be cleaned or repaired. The main thing that should be looked at is the wear and tear that is in the spark plugs.

This also includes the nuts and bolts that are holding the mower together. They should be tight when they are fastened to the lawnmower. Besides checking or replacing this in the spring, you should check to make sure they don't become loose throughout the duration of the season.

One part which should be cleaned at least twice throughout the season is the deck of the lawn mower. This helps the lawn mower to remain consistent while cutting and will help it to last longer. It will also help in preventing the spread of diseases in grass. In order to clean the deck of the lawnmower, you should first empty the gas tank and make sure that the spark plug is not connected. You can then stand the mower up on its side and spray the mower with water. You can then scrub off the rest of the dirt and grass that is stuck on the mower. Make sure to dry the mower after you have finished rinsing it off, to make sure that none of the parts rust.

Two other parts of the mower which should be maintained are the oil and the air filters. The air filters should be cleaned or replaced on a regular basis. Before removing the filter to replace, make sure that you know whether it is paper or foam. The oil that is maintained includes lubricating your mower by putting some oil into the fuel. This is only for two-cycle engine lawn mowers. The four-cycle engine lawn mower should always have oil filled before you mow.

One important part of maintenance, which will help your mower to last longer and will help your grass look better, is sharpening the blades every one to two months. This will allow a clean cut of the grass, rather than rips that may happen in the lawn. You can easily do this by removing the blade from the mower and sharpening it with a file.

When it is no longer necessary to mow your lawn, there are certain things that you can do for your lawnmower to make a better hibernating season. The first is to remove the gas from the gas tank. You should also remove the oil from the mower. If these are left in the mower over the winter, they get to old and get a bad texture to them.

With consistent and proper care of your lawnmower, you will be able to keep your lawn looking great through the seasons and years.

Faking it for the Perfect Lawn: Consider Astro turf

If you think that taking care of your lawn will require too much maintenance and care, but still want your yard to have a green lawn look to it, there are options which you can consider in order to have the best of both worlds. Some consider landscaping, however, this makes it difficult to use the grass as a play ground if you have children or animals. Because of this, Astro turf, also known as synthetic grass, is becoming a popular way to have grass without having to maintain it.

Astro turf first became popular in the late 1960s in order to provide carpets in schools as well as urban playing surfaces that could be used. It came as a result of observing that children who lived in cities and urban areas were not receiving as much exercise as those living in rural areas.

Today, there are several places that sell synthetic turfs for not only playing surfaces, but also for the use of lawns. The difference between Astro turf's and regular grass is that the synthetic grass is often a lot harder than a regular grass would be. It has also been known that it is easy to get stuck in some of the fibers of Astro turf, causing one to fall or trip easier. Several different companies continue to test the synthetic grass for things such as foot traction, weather problems, and wear resistance.

Most Astro turfs are made out of a synthetic fiber that is knitted, tufted from nylon, or made of polypropylene fibers. There are now new kinds of Astro turf's, which are often referred to SmartGrass. These are closer to the idea of natural grass in the fibers. They are usually softer and smoother and have a taller length between blades.

Astro turfs are used in indoor fields in sports, as well as in several different baseball and football stadiums in order to ensure better looking fields. Many of the Astro turf's that are used in this stadium have rubber as the base of the grass, with the different kinds of fibers placed into them. This allows an easier moving ground with the synthetic grass.

The other disadvantage is that if the sun hits the Astro turf, it will often times become hot, making it hard to move on. The Astro turf also stays green all year around, making it obvious that the grass is not real. If you have a lawn in part for neighbors, then it might be better to get real sod in place of a synthetic one. Most say that it is fairly easy to tell that the grass isn't real, not only because it stays green all year around, but also because the look of the grass is not equal to that of real grass.

There are several advantages, however, to having a synthetic lawn. First, there is no need for a large amount of maintenance of a lawn. The only need is to lay it out in your yard and leave it for the season, as well as keep it clean. The second advantage is that there is no contact with dirt or diseases that may be in the outside areas.

This helps to prevent grass stains and dirt from coming into your home. A third advantage is that it saves on water and money in other areas. Some say that it saves up to \$200 a month in maintenance costs. Most say that the grass will last from twelve to twenty years.

The only maintenance that has to take place with an Astroturf is raking leaves and debris off of the synthetic lawn. Occasionally, it is best to wash off the dirt and dust that stays stuck on the grass. The grass is usually installed by the company that you order from, who charge by the amount of feet, which they have to install.

If you are looking for a way to have a yard that is available for enjoyment through grass, but don't want to take the time to maintain it, then Astroturf or other types of synthetic grass may be an easy way to have a lawn that doesn't need the time and money spent for proper care. By using an Astroturf, you can enjoy a yard without having to take care of it as much as you would a regular yard.

Fertile Ground: Five Basic Rules to Applying Fertilizer to Your Lawn

The right fertilizer can make all the difference in your lawn's appearance and texture, but applying the wrong product or applying the fertilizer in the wrong manner may seriously damage your grass. Here are five basic rules that you should keep in mind when planning to apply fertilizer to your lawn.

1. Choose the Right Fertilizer

Because there are so many different soil variations, there are many different varieties of fertilizer. Before choosing a fertilizer for your lawn, you should check the pH level of your soil. You can do so by sending a soil sample off to a lab for analysis or you can get do-it-yourself soil test kit at your local home or garden center. Once you know the levels in your soil, you can fix a fertilizer with the right balance of elements to correct the nutrient levels in your soil.

You can use organic matter to fertilize, but it will be slow releasing and will take some time to adjust the nutrient levels since it is all done naturally. If you choose to buy a non-organic fertilizer (which most gardeners do), then you need to keep three letters in mind: N, P and K. These letters stand for nitrogen (N), phosphorous (P) and potassium (K). All three are essential to good growing conditions and should be present in the right balance in your soil.

Nitrogen gives grass its deep green color and also encourages growth. Phosphorous is responsible for promoting root growth. Finally, potassium connects to the stress resistance of the grass. On the bag of fertilizer you choose there will be three numbers--these numbers represent the percentage of each element in the fertilizer mix. The numbers will always be presented in the order N-P-K.

When you choose a fertilizer mix, you need to know the nutrient levels in your soil area and you also need to know what kind of a mix your variety of grass requires.

2. Know When and How Often to Fertilize

Different varieties of grass have different fertilizer needs. For some grasses, you will only need to fertilize in the fall. The fall is the ideal time to fertilize because the grass can store energy for the long winter ahead. Fertilizing in the spring can sometimes encourage more growth than the grass roots can keep up with. There are some varieties of grass that require fall and spring and there are other types that require fertilization anywhere from four to six times during the growing season. You need to determine what kind of grass you have and then research how often it requires fertilization.

3. Measure Your Lawn Space

You need to make sure that you know that size of your lawn. When measuring how much fertilizer you need make sure that you are only figuring out how much lawn you have. You need to subtract the size of your house, driveway and any planted drives from the size of your property to get the size of your lawn. The standard ratio of nutrients to land space should be listed on the side of the fertilizer bag.

4. Apply the Fertilizer Evenly

You want to make sure that you are applying the fertilizer evenly across your lawn. You do not want to end up with too much or too late in any areas. You should use a fertilizer spreader and if you do not own one, you should see about borrowing one from a neighbor or renting one from your local garden center. If you are unsure of what setting to use on the fertilizer spreader, you should consult the bag of fertilizer. Most fertilizers have the settings for the most common spreaders listed on the back of bag.

5. Plenty of Water

You should water right after you apply the fertilizer--within at least 24 hours. Water is needed to activate the fertilizer and to prevent the fertilizer granules from burning your lawn. Many people fertilize just before they expect it to rain, but you need to make sure that enough water makes it onto your grass within 24 hours of fertilizer application. This will ensure that your lawn sustains no damage during fertilization and that you get the lush, green color that you expect.

Fescue to the Rescue: Five Places Where Fescue Makes for a Great Lawn

Fescues are grasses particularly well suited to cool season climates, though their resistance to drought also makes them suited to dry climates. There are both tall and short fescue varieties. Both kinds share the same main characteristics: they are shade tolerant, stay green all year long and are tolerant of droughts. First introduced into the United States in the early part of the 19th century, fescue grasses can be found growing in low, damp meadows and pastures

throughout North American and Europe, as well as some areas of Northern Africa.

The fescue category is actually composed of about one hundred difference sub-species of grasses. Some of these include creeping red, hard, sheep and chewing fescue. Depending on your needs, you will want to look at the difference species of Fescue grasses. For example, Red Fescue has narrow, deep blades and can be used to establish a lawn very quickly, whereas Hard Fescue is a really hardy grass that is slow growing and requires little maintenance. Fescue varieties are often mixed in with other types of grass to increase the health and vitality of a lawn.

The things that all Fescues share are an ability to grow in shady spots, drought resistance and an ability to grow well with most other varieties of grass.

Here are some of the best spots to use Fescue grasses:

1. Cool, Damp Spots

Fescues are most suited to cooler and damper climates. Tall Fescue can be somewhat drought resistant by going into a dormant state when there is little water to be found, but on the whole fescue grasses are more suited to low lying, damp areas.

2. Clay Soils

Fescue grasses can be adapted to different soil types, but it is soils high in clay levels that most appeal to this variety of grass. Clay soil with a high level of organic material will yield the best results. If you have soil that is rich in clay and organic matter, then fescue grass may be the best option for you.

3. Shady Spots

This type of grass can grow in partial shade. Though virtually all grass needs some kind of sun or light to thrive, there are many varieties that need more light than your landscape is able to provide. If that is the case then you might consider looking into Fescue grass, which can survive in cool, shady spots.

4. Transitional Zones

Though Fescue was originally thought best suited to cooler season climates, it can also work really well in what is know as the transitional zone of the United States. Places like Oklahoma, Tennessee, Kentucky and the northern parts of Georgia and Texas are all part of this transitional zone. Fescue grasses can do very well in areas like because cool season grasses do not survive due to humid summers and warm season grasses fair no better because of colder winters. If you live in this kind of transitional zone, Fescue grasses might be able to thrive where other types of grasses have failed.

5. Round the Old Oak Tree

Because Fescues can survive in shady spots, these grasses do really well under trees. It is

often difficult to find grasses that will do well under the shade of trees, but Fescue is one of these varieties. If you've had trouble in the past with grass around your trees, then you might try planting a variety of Fescue grass. Because Fescue can do well in partial shade, they are well suited to spots under trees that shed their leaves every year.

If you are in a warm season growing climate, than Fescue really isn't the best option for you. There are many varieties of grasses that do well in southern climates, but Fescues aren't one of them. If you are in a northern climate or the transitional zone, then Fescue might be a good option to consider.

Because of the hardiness of this grass, it will work well on its own in certain areas of your lawn and also play nice with other varieties of grass. Mixing in Fescue grasses will help other varieties of grasses you already have in your lawn, perform better, and they might even fix problem shady areas on your lawn.

Five Tips to Maintain a Healthy Lawn While Landscaping

Landscaping your home can be an exciting and invigorating experience, particularly if you plan to do the work yourself. There is something that can get lost in this process though--a healthy lawn. To often your grass pays a price when your attention gets diverted to other sections of your garden. Here are a few suggestions of ways to prevent your lawn from suffering while working on your new landscaping projects.

1. Proper planning

You will probably spend a lot of time planning the landscaping of your new garden. Don't forget about your grass when planning your new layout! While water features and plants are more exciting than the location and shape of grass, it is these green areas that will give your garden its unity and allow you the space to enjoy your new creation. Grass many seem a secondary consideration, but proper planning ahead of time can save a lot of stress on your grass in terms of cutting and moving.

2. Be Aware of Wear and Tear

Landscaping often involves a lot of moving of soil and stones and plants so you want to think ahead and consider what spots on your grass will receive the most traffic. Some grasses stand up to wear and tear better than others so you need to figure out what type of grass you have and how it might fair. Try to reduce the stress on your grass by limiting the amount of traffic that goes across it. You could even lay down boards on the spots that you anticipate the most traffic going through. This may mush up your grass a bit, but will protect it from any major damage. If you do lay down boards, you'll want to make sure that you list them up for mowing and watering so your grass gets all of the care it needs.

3. Continue Your Usual Maintenance

After spending hours in your garden landscaping, the last thing you probably want to do is cut

the grass. It is important that you be consistent in your maintenance throughout the landscaping process. By staying on top of things like length and weeds, you may save yourself valuable time later on. Though it may be the last thing you want to do after a long day slaving away in the garden, your grass still needs the usual maintenance.

4. Try a Little TLC

If you do neglect your grass while working on your landscaping project, then be sure to give it lots of TLC when the project is over with. Grass that has been ignored can often be brought back to its original state with a little care and attention. You'll need to be consistent with your mowing and watering and you might also need to apply fertilizer depending on the state of your grass and the time of the year.

You'll also need to address any weed problems that have crept up while your attention was focused elsewhere. If you have neglected your grass to the point that it has brown spots, then you will need to try to bring that grass back to life through a lot of watering. You can also apply sugar to these brown spots to get the microbes active again. If the damage is too extensive, then try encouraging new growth by spreading grass seed. You can lay new sod if there is no chance for your grass after the landscaping process is over.

5. Water, Water Everywhere

Water can work wonders on neglected grass. When working on your landscaping project, be sure that you are giving your new plants enough water, but don't forget about your grass. Consistent watering can often revive grass that has long been neglected in favor of other gardening projects. Grass that has lost its lush texture and rich color can be revitalized simply through watering in many cases. Watering while the grass is under the stress of landscaping can also really be beneficial.

By ensuring that your grass is getting the nutrients and moisture that it needs, you'll be saving yourself a lot of time in the long run and guaranteeing that your newly landscaped garden looks perfect right down to each blade of grass.

Following Fertilizer Rules: Three Things to Know Before You Fertilize Your Lawn

The first thing you need to consider is when to fertilize your lawn. There are many factors to take into consideration before you fertilize. First, you will need to learn about the two types of grasses, Warm-Season grasses, and Cool-Season grasses. Each of them has their own different growing season, so their fertilizing schedule would not be the same. For both types of grasses, it is better to fertilize when your lawn is in the growth stage.

For Cool-Season grasses, the first time you should fertilize is after the winter dormancy. The second is during the early fall when the weather has turned moderate usually after August. This also is the time when heat waves and droughts are typically over. Nitrogen, an important ingredient, should be applied in larger concentration during the fall growing period and a lesser

amount in the spring.

For Warm-Season grasses because they flourish during the summer months, will need to be fertilized shortly after the grass turns green in the spring and then again in late summer months. Nitrogen in larger concentrate should be applied during early spring and the lesser amount in the fall. That is the opposite of the Cool-Season grasses.

The second thing you should know before you fertilize your lawn is what to use. The three primary elements in fertilizer are nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. There are 13 elements that lawns need to survive but most are already supplied to the lawn from the soil and what surrounds it.

Most fertilizers are sold as complete fertilizer because they contain all three elements. There are numbers listed on the fertilizer package that tells you how much of each element is contained in the fertilizer. The first number represents the nitrogen percentage, the second number is the phosphorus percentage, and the last number is the percentage of potassium that is contained in the fertilizer bag.

What purpose do these three elements serve in your lawn maintenance? Nitrogen is the most important. It is needed to make the grass grow and keep its green color. It also helps with sturdy growth that will help fight weeds and pests and creates thickness and density. Phosphorus encourages strong grass and root growth. An increase in phosphorus is seen during the times of planting and renewing old lawns. Potassium is used to help your lawn's resistance to disease, wear and tear, cold weather, and drought.

If you are unsure of what your lawn needs it is possible to buy home testing kits and complete a soil test. They cost between \$5 and \$10 and have easy to follow instructions. These kits will tell you how much of the three above elements your lawn needs. You should avoid applying nitrogen before your lawn has greened up. It could stimulate and encourage weed growth or other unwanted grasses in your lawn. Don't be chained to a calendar, base the amount and timing of fertilizing on whether the grass is established.

You also need to make sure you know how long the fertilizer will last. Most fertilizers are time released and take two to eight months to release all their nutrients. You need to make sure that enough time has passed since your last fertilization to avoid burning your lawn by over fertilization. Most fertilizers need to be well watered after application. If it just sits on your lawn and is not watered, it could cause yard burn. Wait for a drought to end if you are unable to keep the lawn good and moist after fertilizing.

The third thing you need to know is how to spread the fertilizer on your lawn. Several methods can be used to spread fertilizer. The most important thing to remember is to make sure it is spread evenly no matter which method you use for spreading.

There are three different types of spreaders. The first is a broadcast spreader either a handheld spreader for a small lawn or a walk behind rotary spreader. This spreader will spread typically a three-to five-foot width. The bin will hold a large amount of fertilizer, which can be distributed evenly by moving at a constant rate of speed. These types of spreaders have a release control lever that allows you to control the amount of fertilizer you are spreading on

your lawn to avoid over fertilizing.

The drop spreader performs similar to the rotary spreader but drops the fertilizer straight down and doesn't spread it. If you decide to use this spreading it is a good idea to overlap the wheelbase slightly while making a pass. Two perpendicular passes are recommended for an even spread.

The third type is liquid spraying. This spreading is done by using a garden hose with the fertilizer bottle of concentrated liquid attached to the end. This type of fertilizing can give immediate results. To control the spreading you should spray back and forth after marking your lawns into sections so you will know where you've already been. It's also a good idea to walk backwards so you can see where you have sprayed.

Once you have fertilized, no matter what method you use it's a good idea to water the lawn especially during hot, dry months.

Get Mowed Over: How to Know When to Mow

Mowing may seem like a mundane necessity of keeping your property looking groomed and well maintained. However, mowing is not something to take for granted. It is, in fact, one of the most important lawn care practices you can perform. There are many factors that can affect the effectiveness of your mowing, including the height at which you mow your grass and the blade of the mower. However, the frequency and time that you mow can have a huge impact on the health and appearance of your lawn.

The most important information in knowing when to mow is going by the length of the grass, or the frequency you mow. In a perfect world where you can fit your mowing in with little league games, anniversaries, and trips out of town, you would mow your lawn using what many refer to as the one-third rule. The one-third rule says that you should never mow off more than one third of the length of the grass blades.

To put it another way, if you were to mow your lawn to three inches in length, you would not want to mow it until the blades have reached a length of four and one half inches. Obviously you are not going to wade out into your lawn with a ruler and check out the length of each blade. The idea is that you have a general idea of what you are doing when it comes to how often you cut your grass. Mowing cuts the blades and thus is actually injuring the grass. By not mowing too frequently and keeping the one-third rule in mind, you will be able to minimize the damage you do to the lawn.

What the one-third rule means for you is that your lawn mowing frequency will vary. Your grass, depending on your climate, weather, and type of grass will grow at different rates during different times of year. The other thing to keep in mind with regard to the one-third rule is that you should not wait too long after your grass has reached the one-third cut off length. Because, just as you shouldn't mow too often and cut the grass when it is too short, you should also avoid cutting the lawn when the grass is too long as well.

The first thing that can happen if you let the lawn grow too high is that you are exposing parts of the grass to the sun that are not equipped to handle it. When your grass grows too long, the tops of the blades prevent the bottoms of the blades from being exposed to the sun. When you suddenly then cut off the tops, you expose those bottom parts and your grass will look rough for a couple of weeks.

The second thing that can happen if you cut the blades when they are too long is that you can end up with problems below the surface. The sudden exposure of the bottom blades to the sun can cause the roots to go into shock. This shock can stunt the growth of your lawn for a few days and really add to the shabby look of it. Also, tall grass getting mowed just simply creates larger clippings and thus a bigger mess.

Once you have the frequency down, you should also consider what time of day you are going to mow. Evening is really the best time to mow your lawn. Remember that mowing the grass damages it and it will need to heal. During the day your grass is already being pounded by the sun, so mowing it will only make that worse. If you mow in the evening, your lawn will have some time to begin healing before it is hit with the sun's damaging rays the next morning.

Mowing is a very important part of lawn care. If done properly, it can help you develop a lawn that almost takes care of itself in addition to being something you can be proud of. Perhaps the most misunderstood and most important part of mowing is timing. Since mowing is a damaging process, timing is everything.

You need to make sure you avoid cutting your lawn too frequently, or even from mowing it when it is too long; adhere to the one-third rule. Also, be sure to mow in the evenings so that the cool night can give it time to heal before it has to deal with the harsh sun again during the day. Keep these timing hints in mind and you will be on your way to a great looking and healthy lawn.

Selecting Grass for Your Landscape

The lawn is the most dominant feature of the American home landscape. Most people have lawns to some degree. The lawn may have a flowerbed located in its middle, or it may be reduced in size by a patio, but it is, for the most part, ever present. Not just any sod or grass seed will work everywhere. It is important when you begin designing and building your landscape that you choose grass that will thrive and that is likely to succeed. It is also very important to select grass that answers your ideas of maintenance.

Before you select your grass, however, it is important to decide where you will put it. Practical consideration of how to efficiently water the lawn and care for it is part of the determination as to whether or not your turf will survive. It is not a particularly sound practice to seed or lay sod in long, narrow strips of landscape.

Grass is much better in larger square areas. Odd shaped areas of grass may not receive the water they need (it can be going other places, like onto the driveway or in the lower garden, especially with sprinkler irrigation), while large blocky areas are easier to water and easier to

mow. Take this into account even before you select the grass for your landscape.

When it is time for you to select your grass, think about the requirements that the region in which you live and that your soil will impose upon your grass. Make sure that you have a soil analysis to determine the characteristics of your soil. You want to choose a grass that will thrive in that soil. If the soil is especially bad, you can usually add some sort of amendment to help the soil do better. However, you can increase your chances by choosing sod or seed that will be compatible with your area and with the condition of your soil.

You should also select grasses that fit with your climate. If you live in a hot climate, Bermuda grass and St. Augustine grass may be a good choice. Many people like Kentucky blue grass, but fail to realize that this type of grass does not do especially well in times of drought. If you live in a semi-arid region, then zoysia grass, buffalo grass and centipede grass are very promising choices. These types of grass do not need as much water, and are hardy and great ways to increase the efficiency of a xeriscape by conserving water.

Choosing ornamental grasses can also be important for your landscape. Ornamental grasses are not grasses that are meant to be used as a lawn. These grasses usually grow taller and have distinctive looks. When selecting ornamental grasses to add beauty to the yard, you should take into consideration things like the location of the grasses in your landscape, the colors and textures of the grasses you are using, and whether or not they are compatible with the growing conditions and climate in your area. The advantages of using ornamental grasses in your landscape include the facts that they are low maintenance and that they often conserve water.

In addition to thinking of location (some grasses do well in drier soils in full sun while others require moist soil) and climate when selecting your ornamental grasses, it is also important to approach your choice with a sense of scale. Know how big the grasses will grow. Willows and other large grasses would not do in a small area.

And, if you have a large area, you might consider planting fewer different types of grass plants, but more of the types you do use. The attraction of ornamental grasses planted in large groups is that the grasses grow up to be large patches of color or texture, and can contrast nicely with other portions of the landscape.

Grasses are very important parts of the landscape. Whether you are using sod or seed to plant a beautiful lawn, or whether you are looking for ornamental grasses to be part of your landscape (or both!), you need to consider your grass selections beforehand. When you take into account what has the most chance of success in your landscape, and what would look the best as part of your design, then you end up with a superior looking yard.

Sod Savvy: Five Steps to Ensure that Sod Turns into a Healthy Lawn

Laying down sod for a lawn is known to be an easier way to grow grass. Sod is best planted either in early spring or early fall, depending on the climate of where you live. However, if the ground is not prepared properly, or if it is not laid down right, then the sod can dry out or die. In order to ensure that your lawn becomes healthy and green, here are a few steps to remember when planting sod.

1. Prepare the soil. One of the important things about sod is that it will need to find the right nutrients in your soil once it is laid in your yard. Because of this, it is important to take out all of the old weeds that you have and turn the soil over. After this, you should make sure that the soil is balanced through pH as well as through the type of soil that you have.

One way to prepare the soil is to add the right amount of fertilizer and compost for the soil to continue mixing in nutrients to the lawn. The last thing that you need to do in order to prepare the soil is to even out the yard, leaving as much of a flat surface as possible. You should also remove in rocks or debris that will get in the way of planting the sod.

2. Laying out the sod. When you begin laying out the sod, it is best to start on the outer edges and then work into the center with different strips. This is done to prevent the sod from drying out. Because the edges have the strongest tendency to dry out, starting with the sod that has the full width will allow for more nutrients and water to be available at the edges. Because sod isn't evenly laid, and is different for every yard, you may have to cut strips out of the sod. This is best done in the middle of the yard where there is more sod.

3. Stagger the ends of the sod. If you have to get extra rolls in order to cover your entire lawn, then it is best done by making sure that the ends and beginnings of each piece of sod touch the ends of each other. It is also important to make sure that they don't overlap. By doing this, you won't allow gaps of dirt to take over certain places of the sod and will allow for a consistent green lawn. Strips of sod that are adjacent to each other should be staggered between rows. By not lining them up exactly, it will help them to fit together better and grow easier into the ground.

4. Finishing the laying of sod. The first thing to do when finishing the sod is to make sure it is even. If there are parts on your yard that are lower than others, than you can add some topsoil to make sure that the grounding is even. After this is done, you should take a roller and press the sod into the ground. This will remove extra air pockets that you have missed when laying down the sod. This also allows the sod to make easier contact with the soil, which will ensure its growth and will move the roots into the soil.

5. Watering and mowing. Your sod should be watered everyday for a couple of weeks. This will help to ensure that the roots are moving into the soil. It will also allow for the right amount of nutrients to move into the sod. Your sod can easily dry out if the watering is not done. In this time, you shouldn't have to mow the sod, as it will cause extra stress to the grass. Once you see that the sod is settled into the soil, and is growing at an even rate, than you can start mowing on a regular basis.

Preparing and laying down sod properly is one way in order to make sure that your grass begins to grow healthy and become green throughout the season. By preparing your yard to lay down the sod and by following a few simple tips, your sod will grow into your soil easily.

Common Landscape Problems (And How to Fix Them)

There are plenty of common landscape problems that can really mar the beauty of your yard. These problems range from something aesthetic to things that can actually affect the overall health of your landscape. When you encounter these problems, it is a good idea to fix them as soon as possible. If you have ideas of your own to fix landscape problems, so much the better. If not, here are some suggestions for making simple improvements to the landscape.

Side yards are usually among the most common of landscape problems. They are so narrow that they may be hard to maintain as far as lawn is concerned, and they also make better passages than practical places to play or sit. Sometimes they seem like the perfect place to "store" odd items and then simply turn into junk heaps.

To prevent junky or barren side yard from tainting an otherwise beautiful landscape design, turn into a cottage garden or courtyard garden. Perennials and ornamental grasses, all in a variety of colors, are perfect for side yards. Turn it into a kind of wild little garden full of color. It will look beautiful and will not be an inviting place to stack junk. If you would still like to use the side yard as a pathway, it is possible to install a little pathway made from stone.

Excess mulch is a landscape problem that has plant health implications. The problem is especially prevalent near driveways, walkways, and lawns. Mulch often overflows from flowerbeds or gardens, and this can create an untidy look to the yard. Additionally, if you have too much mulch (preferred depth is 2 to 4 inches) you can damage the plants and cause root rot.

There are a couple of things that can be done to prevent mulch overflow (which can happen if you put 3 inches of mulch on top of the soil bed). One of the things you can do is to use ground cover plants along the borders. This will be attractive and help to contain the mulch. Another possibility is to lower the soil level about 3 inches. Then you can add the mulch and rather than being higher than a nearby hard permanent surface, the mulch will be level with it, but still performing its job of plant care.

Exposed air conditioners and swamp coolers can be very visible blights on the landscape. While this is mostly a problem of aesthetics, exposed appliances can be heated by the sun, causing them to work harder and use more energy. Both of these problems can be fixed simply by planting a small tree or a hedge. The offending appliance is screened from view, and the shade helps keep the unit cooler, resulting in lower energy bills. This can even be done in areas where space is at a premium: you can plant a narrow hedge of nandina (should be 30 inches from the unit) or you can add a trellis with a colorful vine or climbing roses.

There are areas in your landscape that are too small for grass, and sometimes you may have odd corners that are not feasible for you to plant grass. Most of these areas are near an entrance, or at the edge of a patio or deck. Some of them are near walkways. No matter where they are, these areas are hard to mow and otherwise maintain. Solutions to these problems are also varied. Making use of containers with plants is an attractive solution.

One large container with one plant can be used, or it is possible to make a small container garden with a variety of plants in containers of various sizes, shapes, and colors. Problem areas

such as these are also ideal locations for accent objects such as an obelisk, a stature or even topiary bushes. Water features can add cooling and soothing effects to your landscape, and there are a variety of water features that can be built to fit into nearly any space.

Solving landscape problems is not too difficult if you use a little creativity. These problems can transform eye sores into beautiful additions to your yard that create enjoyment for you and add distinction to your home environment.

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