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# Caring for your lawn in spring

The care that your grass needs now in the spring is very little.

Leaves and debris on the surface of your grass should be removed with a light rake. When raking it is better for your grass that you not use any force, otherwise you risk damaging the crowns of the grass. Raked leaves can be placed onto your beds as mulch, and debris should be discarded. Depressions in your lawn can be filled with topsoil, not with peat moss or manure. Seed the filled-in areas, roll them with a roller, and water them.

To ensure that your lawn stays healthy throughout spring and summer, spread some mineral fertilizer onto your lawn. Half the recommended amount will suffice. A slow but long-acting fertilizer high in nitrogen (N) and low in phosphor (P) and Kali (K) is best. You can buy this type of fertilizer at a garden centre. Biological fertilizers are only partly effective, in spite of their recommendations.

Top dressing is not necessary unless your lawn is in need of topsoil. A recommended layer of 4 to 5 inches of topsoil creates a healthy base for your lawn. If your lawn is in need of more topsoil, spread one inch of topsoil over your lawn each year until you have attained the required base.

Forget the so-called "over seeding" of a lawn since it is only effective on bare soil. Aeration of a lawn is, likewise, also not essential except on sports fields or on very



compacted soil. Dethatching is also not necessary as grass clippings decompose over time.

When mowing your lawn, adjust the mower height so that the grass is cut to a height of 2-3 inches. At this height, the grass is able to, to a greater extent, keep weeds suppressed. Fertilizing twice per year with a fertilizer high in nitrogen, as mentioned above, will also keep the grass healthy and aid in the suppression of weeds. A well-watered lawn will do the same. You can also choose to ignore the weeds, however, be warned that they can quickly take over an uncared for lawn. Weed control with the new permissible products is, at best, questionable.

Although a no-maintenance garden would be a utopia, a certain amount of work is always necessary. Don't overdo it though; certainly garden work is healthy, yet don't forget that the garden is there for you, you are not there for the garden!

The advice in this article is based on over 50 years of experience in the field. I hope have saved you some time and expense.

— Article provided by Rudolf Schubert, Landscape Consultant and author of *No Nonsense Gardening RR #1, Acton (email: rudolfshubert.com)*



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