

Lawn care tips

(NC) Now's the time to get outside and survey lawns, gardens and shrubs to see how they weathered the winter. After a long period of dormancy, plants and turf are ready to grow during what amounts to a short season for most of Canada.

To maximize the health, resiliency and growth of your plants, regular feeding is required. All plants require nitrogen, potassium and phosphorus to grow. Nitrogen boosts growth and green colour. Phosphorus feeds seedlings and stimulates new root growth. And potassium provides all around vigour and health and strengthens resistance to disease and stress.

When it comes to lawns, feeding promotes a thick, healthy turf that can fight off weeds and withstand drought conditions. Fertilizer provides nutrients in the proper amounts. Review your options at your local lawn and garden centre by reading the fertilizer bag label or by testing your soil with a home kit or professional lawn care service.

The three numbers on the bag indicate the ratio of three key nutrients

included in all fertilizers: nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, listed in this order. For example, if a bag reads 21-4-3 it contains 21 per cent nitrogen, 4 per cent phosphorus and 3 per cent potassium.

Know the size of your lawn and buy only what you need. Follow the instructions on the bag and remember that more is not always better. Use a good quality lawn fertilizer spreader or a handheld model to distribute fertilizer evenly.

Feed your lawn every other month beginning in the spring. A lawn fed three to four times a year develops a deep root system to resist heat, drought and wear. It also develops thick green top growth to naturally resist weeds, disease and insects. Canadian holidays are an easy way to remember best times to feed your lawn — think Easter, Victoria Day, Labour Day and Thanksgiving.

To keep fertilizer on the grass and prevent it from running off into sewers, sweep any stray granules on driveways, patios and sidewalks back onto your lawn where it can do its job.



...and tips for the home

Get those gutters clean. With warmer weather and a greater likelihood of flash rain storms, now is the time to make sure your eavestroughs are clean. Removing any debris like leaves and dirt will prevent gutter backup and reduce leaks when it rains.

Keep the roof over your head. Roof damage — including loose shingles, leaks and cracks — is common during the winter due to the heavy weight added by snow and ice and icicle formation. As winter melts away, inspect your roof and attic to determine if any repairs are required.

Check the drainage of your property. Receding snow and ice may unveil eroded landscapes or pond-sized puddles on your property. Take advantage of the changing season to ensure your property is fitted with appropriate drainage fixes. This may be as simple as extending your downspout to drain into the lowest area of your yard.



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