

For a healthier, better looking lawn divide the season into five stages

If the grass always seems greener on your neighbour's side of the fence, the experts at Home Depot have some advice that will help make your lawn the envy of the neighbourhood the whole season long.

Start by dividing the season into five stages: early spring, late spring, summer, early fall and late fall. By following a few simple steps in each stage, your grass will be healthy all year round.

"The most important time to care for your lawn is in the spring," says John Mantz, Home Depot's lawn and garden expert. "By starting the season off right, you'll have less work on your hands and a better lawn under your feet."

In early spring, apply a 'weed-and-feed' combination to the lawn. It will encourage the grass to green up earlier and controls weeds such as crabgrass and clover. Once applied, it's important to stay off the grass when possible. Wet soil in spring compacts easily, making it difficult for grass to grow well.

Early spring is also a great time to bring garden tools out of hibernation and check that they're ready to use. The first tool to check is the lawnmower. Dull blades make the tips of cut grass turn brown, so make sure they're sharp for the cutting season.

Late spring is the time to apply fertilizer. Fertilizer feeds the lawn and encourages it to grow thick and lush. Start watering the lawn when rainfall gets below an inch per week.

In the summer, you will also need to apply fertilizer to continue to feed the grass. This provides nitrogen and other nutrients needed to maintain a thick, green lawn. If insects, such as grubs, are a problem, apply an insect control or combination pest control and fertilizer.

"Your lawnmower is just like any other machine, it needs to be taken care of," reminds Mantz. "Now that you've been using it for half of the season, you'll need to change or wash its air filter."

Replace paper filters or wash plastic foam filters in warm, soapy water.

Once the leaves start to fall, that's the queue for the fourth application of fertilizer. It is also important to rake leaves regularly, in early fall, as they can kill the grass beneath. The more frequently you rake, the easier the job will be.

The final stage is late fall. Now that you've enjoyed your lawn all summer, it's time to prepare it for the long winter ahead.

"Late fall is a crucial time for gardeners to prepare their lawns for the coming winter months," says Mantz. "With proper care, grass will develop stronger roots and green up faster next spring."

To 'winterize' your lawn, apply fertilizer made specifically for the season. Late fall is also the time to patch thin or bare spots as needed or start new lawns from seed or new sod.

—News Canada

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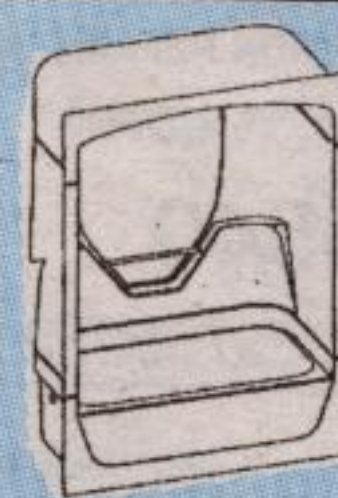
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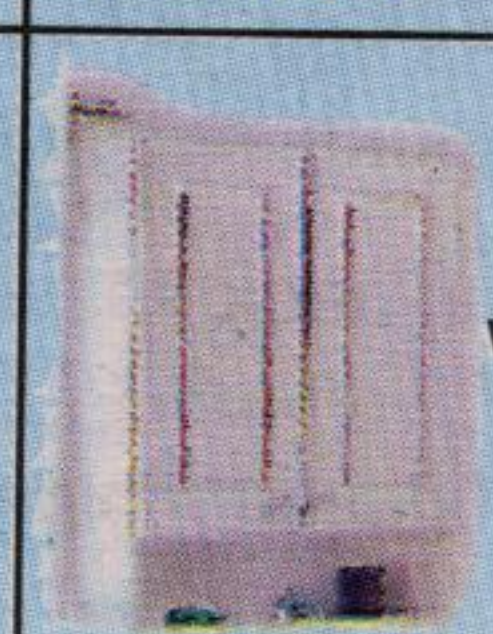


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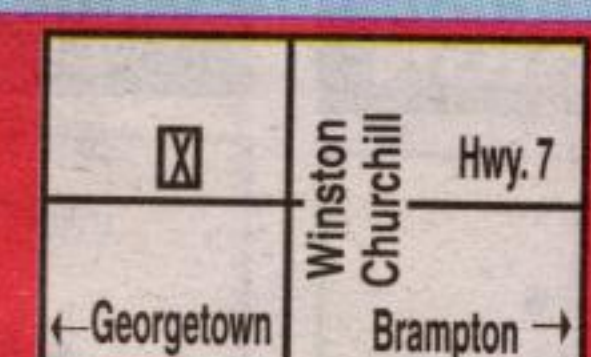
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