

Lawn Care Throughout the Year

March (snowmelt)

- Don't walk on soggy cold lawns
- Remove debris from lawn
- Inspect for dead patches and determine the cause (insect, disease, salt or mechanical)
- Inspect for bare and thin areas
- Sharpen mower blades

April

- Lightly rake to break up snow mould and to remove loose thatch
- Test your soil if there is a problem
- Apply gypsum to yards with pets
- In salt-damaged areas, aerate, apply gypsum or lime and water deeply to flush away the salt
- Reseed dead patches and over-seed poor areas with a grass seed mix that is suited to the sunlight conditions for each area
- Perennial rye and fescue grasses are more tolerant of salt than Kentucky bluegrass
- Consider alternative ground covers and/or different landscaping to prevent future problems
- Apply corn gluten meal, a natural pre-emergent herbicide

May

- Aerate compacted areas of the lawn
- Remove thatch if it is ½ cm, (¼" or pencil width) in depth
- Topdress the lawn with organic material, such as compost, or with screened topdressing soil mix.
- Supplement the soil as indicated by the soil test

- Spot seed and over-seed if you haven't already done so
- Maintain the lawn at a mowing height of 7-8 cms (3"), leave clippings on the lawn, cut less than 1/3 of blade height each time.
- Mow when grass is dry
- Water deeply 2.5 cm (1") every 7-10 days if necessary
- Fertilizers are not necessary especially if the lawn is treated with corn gluten meal, topdressed or the clippings are left on. If fertilizing, use a balanced one
- Hand pull weeds
- Corn gluten meal reduces weeds and can be applied until the end of May. CGM is also a source of Nitrogen fertilizer. Do not use on areas with grass seed

June

- As growth slows, reduce mowing frequency
- Monitor and treat for; heat stress, insects and diseases
- If hot and dry, water the lawn about ½ cm (¼"-1/8"), every few days during the hottest part of the day to reduce heat stress
- Hand pull weeds
- Apply the summer treatment of corn gluten meal

July

- Maintain the lawn at a mowing height of 7-8 cms (3 inches)
- Monitor and treat for; heat stress, insects and diseases

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- Fertilize with a balanced slow release or organic fertilizer (optional)
- Water 0.5cm (¼"-1/8"), every few days or let the lawn go dormant (turn brown), don't cut until it recovers after a rain
- Cut only when necessary
- Hand pull weeds
- Sharpen mower blades

August

- As in July, allow grass to go dormant
- Water deeply 2.5 cm (1 inch) every 7-10 days if a dormant lawn is not acceptable
- Hand pull weeds
- Monitor and treat for insects and diseases
- Maintain mowing height at 7-8 cms

September

- The fall is the best time to Dethatch, Aerate and Topdress the lawn
- Over-seed and re-seed weak patches
- Water deeply 2.5cm (1 inch) every 7-10 days if there is no rain
- Monitor and treat for insects and diseases
- Apply a fertilizer low in Nitrogen and higher in Phosphate and Potassium to increase winter hardiness (optional)
- Hand pull weeds
- Apply corn gluten meal if not putting down grass seed

October

- Monitor and treat for insects and diseases

- Chop fallen leaves with mower and leave up to 0.5cm mulch, compost the remainder if insect and disease free
- Service lawnmower and sharpen blades
- Plan to minimize salt damage this winter by applying gypsum to the areas of the lawn normally affected
- Hand pull weeds
- Apply corn gluten meal in late October if grass seed was used in September

cc. City of Ottawa
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