

Lawn Health Care

The key to a healthy and attractive lawn is a thick, deep root system. Here at Rockcliffe Landscaping we are committed to finding environmentally responsible ways of providing the homeowner with a beautiful lawn, without harming the environment. We advocate good maintenance practices and organic fertilizers to ensure a healthy and attractive lawn.

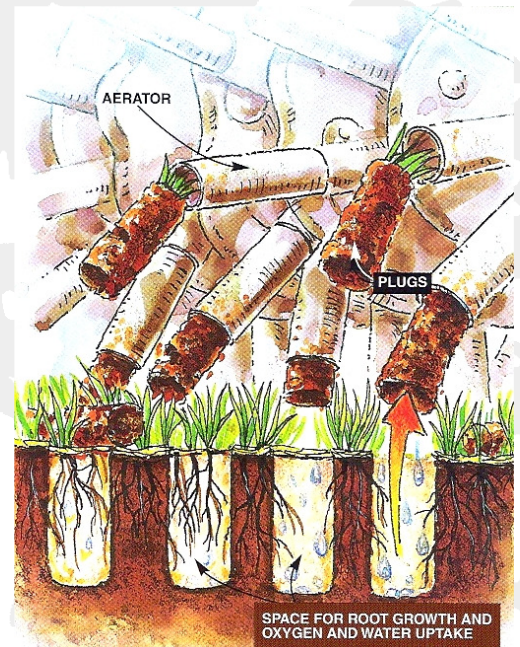
Below, we outline six ways to promote a thick, deep root system, which will help your grass resist insect and weed infestations.

Watering

Watering is the most important factor in promoting healthy lawns. We recommend 1"-2" of water per application once a week, either by Mother Nature or man. We have noticed the increasing popularity of irrigation systems which are a great time saver, however correct use is vital. Too much water can be just as damaging as too little water. Frequent watering will encourage shallow roots on your grass, instead of deep, dense roots which are vital in healthy lawns. Too much water can also encourage fungal and bacterial diseases. Seasonal variations in weather such as air temperature, winds, natural rainfall and amount of direct sunlight and sun angle all play a factor into the amount of water we need to provide to our lawns. It is a good idea to monitor the changes in the weather throughout the season and adjust your irrigation system or watering habits accordingly.

Aerating

Aeration should be done twice a year, once in the spring and once in the fall. It should be avoided during hot dry weather as this will stress the lawn. Aeration improves the ability of water and air to penetrate into the soil. Grass that is aerated twice yearly will grow strong, dense root systems by filling in the plugs as shown in the photo.



Mowing

Increase the height of your lawn, especially during hot dry weather. If your lawn is cut even just 1/2 inch higher than normal, the extra length of the grass will help to shade the roots and decrease soil temperatures and water evaporation from the soil. You will also prevent unnecessary stress on the lawn due to it being cut too short. Using equipment in excellent working order with sharp blades will provide a clean, even cut, and further minimizing stress.

Dethatching

Dethatching is done with a machine which combs out the thick layer of dead grass which accumulates on the soil surface. Thatch acts as a barrier to water and air infiltration to the roots. Thatch also provides protection for insects, such as the Chinch bug. A small amount of thatch is desirable, however, healthy thick lawns benefit from an annual dethatching done in the spring before the lawn has thickened up.

Fertilization

Lawn fertilizing is an often misunderstood topic. Our belief is that for a home lawn the key is to provide a balanced supply of nutrients to promote a good root system. All too often the over use of high nitrogen fertilizers results in a stressed or damaged lawn. Fertilizing three times in the season with a balanced seasonally appropriate product provides the lawn with a constant supply of nutrients. A high quality organically based fertilizer consisting of the right ratios of nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium at the appropriate times of year will encourage good root development, which will result in healthy top growth.

**The process of correcting lawns that have been given regular doses of synthetic high nitrogen fertilizer will take time to develop proper root systems and lush green foliage.*

Topdressing

We recommend having your lawn top dressed with compost. Research has shown that compost contains important micro-organisms which help protect the turf against fungal and bacterial diseases. Also compost provides organic matter which over many applications will greatly improve the soil structure allowing for a better root system. This can be done at any time during the summer; however it is much easier to spread on a lawn which is cut short, making the cooler months more appropriate.