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TURFGRASS BASICS FOR EVERYONE

When trying to maintain a lawn, The Lawn Institute (www.thelawninstitute.org) offers a few inherent truths that all people should know.

- The best defense against weeds is a thick healthy lawn.
- The higher you mow grass the deeper roots will develop.
- Every time turf is mowed it is a shock to the grass plants, alleviate some of the stress by mowing in the evening.
- Never remove more than 1/3 of the leaf height when mowing.
- Grass should be watered in the morning from 5am-10am. This allows for the water to make its way into the soil and the sun will soon rise to evaporate moisture on the leaves.
- Too much fertilizer is just as bad as not enough.
- The only way to know how much fertilizer you need is to have a soil test conducted.
- Fall is the best time of year to kill most broadleaf weeds.
- A good fertility program begins in the fall while the natural instinct of the plant is to build roots.
- Grass should not be fertilized in the heat of the summer unless it is irrigated.
- Grass should not be irrigated daily. Watering two days per week will encourage deeper roots.
- Most home lawns need less than 1 inch of water per week even during the hottest temperatures.
- Fall is the best time to aerate and seed/overseed a lawn because there is less weed pressure.
- Mowing with a dull blade can cause grass to tear giving the lawn a yellow or brown appearance and increase the chance that the grass gets infected with a disease.

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- Most grasses have the ability to go dormant during periods of stress. In hot or dry conditions grass will slow down growth and possibly lose color. When conditions become favorable again the grass will begin to grow again.
- It is perfectly normal to have some dead blades of grass in your lawn. Leaves of grass normally live only a few months and will not live more than 1 year in most cases.
- Just because insects are found in your lawn there is no reason to panic. Most insects do not feed on grass.
- Using a mulching mower is good for your grass and good for the environment. Clippings decompose quickly, releasing nutrients back into the soil and saving on fertilizer costs. Returning grass blades to the soil can replace up to 1 pound of Nitrogen per 1000 square feet. This also keeps clippings out of landfills.
- A healthy lawn can decrease home cooling costs while also producing clean oxygen. Natural grass surfaces can be up to 50 degrees cooler than hard surfaces such as driveways.

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