Growing a Healthy Lawn

Grass is a living thing, and like all live organisms, it needs food, oxygen and water to survive. Fortunately, it only requires a little effort to give it what it needs to thrive. Feeding turf by adding nutrients to the soil, making sure air is getting to the plant, and providing a drink when it is needed are three simple steps to growing a healthy lawn. Let's look at them a little more closely.

FEEDING

Nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, or NPK, are the "Big 3" primary nutrients in commercial fertilizers. Each of these fundamental nutrients plays a key role in plant nutrition.

Nitrogen is considered to be the most important nutrient, and plants absorb more nitrogen than any other element. Nitrogen is essential in the formation of protein, and protein makes up much of the tissues of most living things. Nitrogen promotes rapid growth, leaf development, chlorophyll formation and protein synthesis.

The second of the Big 3, phosphorus, is linked to a plant's ability to use and store energy, including the process of photosynthesis. Phosphorus plays a key role in early root growth, stimulates blooming and aids seed formation. Phosphorus is essential in establishment of turf, so we often recommend higher levels for young turf. Phosphate is very persistent in the soil and so should only be used with care. Excessive levels should be avoided on fine turf as it encourages weed grasses and makes the turf more prone to disease. It is normal to recommend adopting a zero-phosphate fertilizer program in established lawns.

Potassium is the third key nutrient of commercial fertilizers. It helps strengthen plants' abilities to resist disease and plays an important role in increasing overall quality. Potassium also protects the plant when the weather is cold or dry, strengthening its root system and preventing wilt.

AIR

Lawns need to breath. Making sure your grass isn't getting smothered is important to the plants overall health. Aerating the lawn every year or two breaks up the thatch layer and loosens compacted soil, thus allowing the oxygen to get to all of the plant.

WATER

Grass needs about one inch of water per week to survive. While mother nature helps us out by providing some of that we can't rely on it. Giving your lawn a good long drink every week will ensure that it is getting enough water to be healthy and thrive.

Benefits of Turfgrass/Soil Ecosystems

Functional

- Soil erosion control
- Dust prevention
- Disease prevention
- Natural filtering system
- Buffer areas
- Flood control
- Soil restoration
- Carbon absorption
- Ground water recharge
- Heat dissipation
- Air pollution control
- Fire barrier
- Noise abatement
- Glare reduction
- Roadside safety
- Crime control
- Nuisance animal reduction
- Wildlife habitat
- Pollen/weed control

Recreational

- Physical health
- Mental health
- Decreased injury risk
- Family lawn activities
- Community recreation
- Community sports
- Spectator entertainment

Quality of Life

- Increased property values
- Aesthetic beauty
- Community pride
- Human productivity
- Mental Health
- Social Harmony