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Mid/Late Spring 2024 Newsletter and Tips

How you care for your lawn and soil at this time of the year can make a huge difference in what happens later on in the season. A healthier lawn and soil will have better color throughout the year, as well as less weeds, crabgrass, and insect issues. This newsletter is loaded with useful information and guidance, so make sure you give it a read.

The mid-spring application will help keep your lawn green and healthy well into early summer. If you ordered weed control, the weeds should start to show signs of dying within 7-10 days after treatment. If they don't, call the office for a re-spray.

THE SEASON SO FAR

The cold and wet early spring delayed grass and weed growth a bit, but things are looking very good. If the cool weather continues as expected, lawns will have better than usual color this season. Our Buffalo grasses thrive when temperatures are between 60 and 75 degrees.

Grub/Crane Fly alert. The winter soil temperatures were not consistently cold enough to kill off the over-wintering insects. Due to this, we expect to see more grubs and crane flies this season, as well as Ticks and other lawn insects. If you did not order insect prevention it's not too late. We have both conventional chemical controls as well as organic insect prevention available. Just call the office to get on the schedule.

Attention pet owners! Yard Guard-Organic Flea & Tick Spray protects you pets and yourselves with safe and natural treatments for lawns and surrounding plantings. Regular applications are required for best results. Yard Guard also works to protect the lawn from Grubs and Crane Fly larvae.

A HEALTHY LAWN BEGINS WITH A HEALTHY SOIL

A porous soil that is abundant in nutrients and organic matter will give you the healthiest possible lawn, and will decrease the likelihood of weeds, insects, and disease.

In WNY we have a lot of really bad clay soils that get sticky, compacted, and need aerations as well as organic matter and humus. There are also sections of Erie County that are quite sandy. This type of soil is low in organic matter and lacks the ability to hold nutrients and water. Often it is too acidic.

Here are some Soil Treatments that can benefit the health and color of all lawns:

Natural (liquid) Aeration. The absolute best way to improve clay and compacted soil is with our **Natural Aeration** application. This is more effective, less messy, and much less expensive than core aeration. It also enriches the soil with Kelp and Humates. These provide trace elements and bio-stimulants that improve color, health, and rooting. For really bad clay you should do it twice a year.

Compost Bio-activator or Liquid Compost. Improve the bio-life in your soil with this organic application. It helps improve grass color, health, and rooting. It will also help improve clay soils as it generates and feeds beneficial soil microbes that improve soil structure and aeration. Helps sandy soils hold more nutrients.

Organic Soil Builder: Organic matter is needed in order to change “dirt” into good soil. Sandy soils always lack organic matter, but clay soils are usually deficient too. This shows up on most lab soil tests. The best product we have for increasing organic matter is our **Organic Soil Builder**.

pH Improvement with Sulfur or Lime. Poor pH ties up nutrients in the soil. It affects, color, plant health, and resistance to disease. Sulfur improves alkaline soils, while Lime (calcium) helps acidic soils. If you’ve had a Lab Soil Test done in the past, make sure you get the needed amendment.

Lab Soil Test. We offer a 14 point analysis from Waypoint Labs. This tells us what your base soil is actually like. It will uncover hidden excesses or deficiencies that could be affecting the color and health of your grass.

LATE SPRING LAWN TIPS. (Visit our *Lawn Care Education* section on our homepage for more tips.)

Mow high: Higher mowing promotes deeper rooting, improved color, and can help prevent *crabgrass*. Your lawn should be 3” or more *before* summer begins, *not after it is already hot and dry*. **The only grass around here that should be mowed shorter is sideways growing *Creeping Bentgrass*.**

Did you know? *With continuous short mowing, the grass will eventually weaken and gradually die off. Short mowing, as well as scalping the edges the lawn with a weed wacker will also allow **weeds, crabgrass, and moss** to fill in.*

Don’t mow too much off at once. Instead of mowing the lawn, think of it as *trimming* the lawn. Try not to cut more than 1/3 of the leaf blade at once. Don't wait too long before mowing. If you mow high and often, the clippings should be short and you can (and should) leave them on the lawn. A mulching blade would be best.

Watering: When soils are already saturated, it is a good idea to hold off watering. Otherwise, roots will stay close to the surface and not dig in deeply. In the spring, the best advice is don't water until the grass needs it. If the grass is thick and still growing fast, it probably has plenty of water in the root zone. Lawn growth in late spring slows down if water is needed. There will also be a number of visible signs of your grass being too dry: 1. There will be a bluish tint to the grass. 2. Leaf blades will shrink inwards and will look much thinner. 3. If the lawn needs more water, you will see lingering footprints after you walk across it.

When it's time to water, water deeply. Light watering doesn't penetrate far into the root zone, especially when you have clay soil or *thatch*. (When lawns are dry, *water all areas for 2-3 hours at a time*, giving the grass an inch of water once a week. Our **Water Saver** application, used a lot on sports fields, can lower water needs up to 50%.)

Enjoy the spring! We'll see you on the next round.

Note: All newsletters are also posted on our Educational Pages at www.greenbuffalolawncare.com