

A Guide to Better Grass

The First LAW (Light, Air, Water)

Grass grows when soil Temperatures are above 6 Degrees Centigrade. Grass needs, moisture, nutrients, Carbon dioxide and sunlight. All free or nearly free, if you have to pay for water.

At the base of the grass we have the crown, stems (culm) grow up to nodes. The leaf forms from here in different directions.

Grass is phototropic and the leaf grows towards the light, the leaves tend to taper so more light can reach more of the leaf to enable effective photosynthesis (converting light energy into chemical energy in sugar bonds using chlorophyll, causing the essential green in grass).

The Grass also needs a healthy root structure and a soil with an Acidity (pH) level at around 6.5.

Grass is most productive when it undergoes a defoliation process (Grazing or Mowing).

Maximising leaf growth and thus photosynthesis. When it loses a proportion of leaf it has retained excessive nutrients for the size of foliage and therefore grows quicker and healthier.

The Basis of an average healthy lawn is to maintain grass at between 2" and 3". Cut the grass on a regular basis and never more than 30% of the standing length. Cut the grass when it needs it, disregard calendar based schedules; the growth will vary with temperature and moisture.

When we drop the cutting height down to $\frac{1}{2}$ " to $\frac{3}{4}$ " we then come away from Grass areas to what we call Lawns.

More care has to be taken being conscious not to cut too short during the summer drought period. Little moisture is retained in the soil, the lawn will scorch and then turn brown, once moisture returns the grass will recover. Do not cut too close during winter periods as this can create areas of sparse growth and moss will form in the weak or shaded areas. Avoid too much traffic on the lawn during hard ground frosts.

Your lawn will require periodic aeration. This will create better drainage and ensure surface water drains effectively, it also breaks up compaction in the soil promoting healthy root growth. Scarification removes thatch (a layer of dead grass, culm and moss), letting light through to more of the leaf and ensuring more of the leaf remains green decreasing yellow patches on the lawn after mowing.

Fertilising needs to be carried out very carefully ensuring you have an understanding of your lawn acidity level, monitor the weather either side of fertilising. The principle minerals to promote a healthy lawn are Nitrogen, Phosphorous, Potassium and Iron. DO NOT OVER FERTILISE, this can cause burning of the grass. Take advice from the fertiliser supplier.