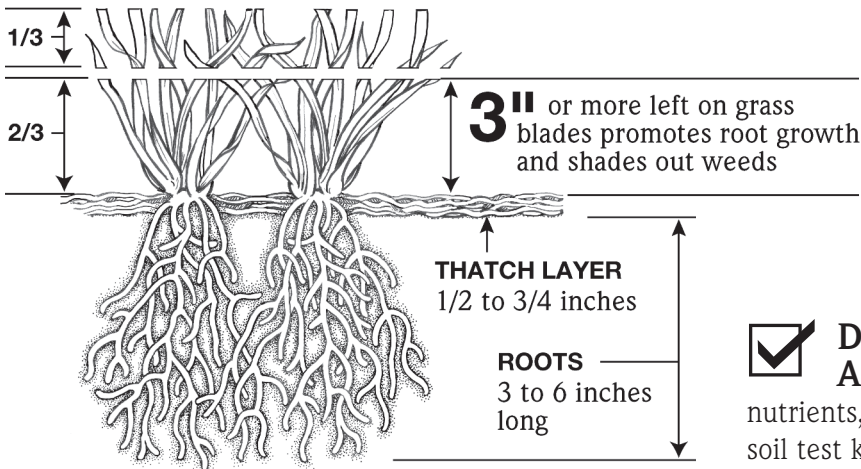




Healthy Lawn CARE TIPS 2011

SOCWA, Southeastern Oakland County Water Authority 3910 W. Webster Road, Royal Oak, MI 48073-2761, 248-288-5150

Cut It High...Let It Lie!



For further information...

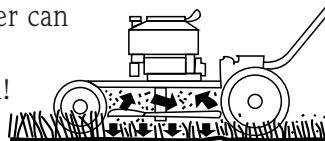
SOCWA fact sheets, videos and reports
www.socwa.org

Michigan State University fact sheets and research
www.turf.msu.edu

Oakland County Plant and Pest Hotline
 248-858-0902

Healthy Lawn Checklist

Mulch Your Grass Clippings. Let short clips fall back on the lawn. Clippings are a source of nitrogen, so fertilizer can be reduced by 25% or more. Clippings do not cause thatch!



Cut High. Leave 3 inches on the grass blade after cutting. Tall grass promotes root growth and shades out weeds.

Build Soil Organic Matter – to 5% or More. Healthy soil has 5% or more organic matter. The organic matter provides a natural reservoir of nutrients and holds water. To assess your soil, test for basic nutrients and organic matter every one to three years.

Don't Guess...Soil Test! April 2 – May 2011. To test your soil for nutrients, pH, and organic matter, purchase the MSU soil test kit at a participating retailer in April. You will receive the results plus fertilizer recommendation from MSU. Over-application of fertilizers can pollute rivers and lakes - and waste money.

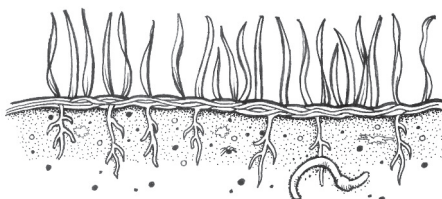
Aerate Compacted Soil. Use a core aerator that removes finger-like plugs of grass and soil – or hire a professional service. Core aeration improves drainage and allows water and oxygen to reach the grass roots.

Rake Compost Into the Lawn. Rake 1/2 inch of compost into an established lawn. Leave half of the grass blade exposed to sunlight and air. Compost adds microorganisms, nutrients and organic matter, helping to build soil fertility.

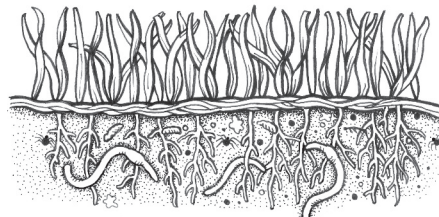
Water the Lawn to Minimize Stress. A green lawn in Michigan needs .5 to 1.5 inches

of water per week. Don't soak your lawn; watering should not produce puddles. Light, frequent watering which reaches the grass roots is recommended by Michigan State University. Lawn dormancy is a natural response to drought. However, some water may be necessary during an extended drought of more than a month.

HEALTHY SOIL HAS HIGH ORGANIC MATTER CONTENT



LOW ORGANIC MATTER



HIGH ORGANIC MATTER

Healthy Lawn Checklist, continued

Select Earth-Friendly Fertilizers.

Look for the green label at participating retailers. For a list of recommended fertilizers and participating retailers, see www.socwa.org.



Leave a “No Fertilizer” Buffer Zone Near Lakes and Rivers.

The recommended width for “no fertilizer” buffers is 20 to 25 feet or more, depending on the slope of the lawn. Instead of turfgrass, consider planting native grasses, tall wildflowers, and/or shrubs to trap pollutants and discourage Canadian geese.

Avoid Weed-and-Feed Combination Products.

Combination fertilizer and weed control products often add unnecessary herbicides to the landscape. Herbicides pose a threat to animals, plants and insects beyond the intended weeds or pests. Spot-treatment or hand-digging of weeds are better approaches for the environment.

Practice IPM – Integrated Pest Management.

Identify the weeds or insects of concern and select the least toxic control option. Read the label and follow directions – the label is the law. Telephone the National Pesticide Information Center (NPIC) at 1-800-858-7378 for chemical information.

Examples of Recommended Lawn Fertilizers (partial list)

ACO Fall Lawn Food	21 - 0 - 4
Corn Gluten Products	9 - 0 - 0
Espoma Organic Weed Preventer	9 - 0 - 0
Fertrell Lawn Fertilizers	9 - 1 - 4 or 8 - 1 - 8
Ringer Lawn Restore	10 - 2 - 6
Scotts Organic Choice Lawn Food	11 - 2 - 2
Turf Nurture	15 - 2 - 7
Organic Lawn Booster	8 - 1 - 1

Fertilize in the Fall for Best Results. Do Not Fertilize Before May.

Fall fertilization builds grass roots. Additional fertilizer before May is rarely needed. Do not spread fertilizer or weed-and-feed products if the ground is frozen.

Don’t Waste Fertilizer. Measure the lawn area you intend to fertilize – but do not include garden and pavement areas in the calculation. Read the fertilizer bag label to determine the amount of fertilizer needed. Reduce the number of applications if clippings are left on the lawn or if the lawn is in partial shade.

Sweep Fertilizer from Paved Surfaces. Fertilizer left on sidewalks and driveways can easily wash into storm drains, rivers, and lakes. Sweep fertilizer pellets back onto the lawn.

Mow Dry Leaves. In the Fall, mow dry leaves into the lawn. A shallow layer of leaf fragments will decompose quickly and contribute organic matter and nutrients to the system.

Do You Use A Lawn Service?



Request the Healthy Lawn Care Program for Watershed Protection

For a list of endorsed companies, contact the Michigan Green Industry Association at 248-646-4992 or see www.Landscape.org, section titled professionals/contractors.

Program components:

- On-site consultation to address customer needs
- Earth-friendly fertilizer.
- Fertilizer quantities of 2, 3, or 4 pounds per 1000 square feet, applied over the growing season
- Insect and weed control options: no pesticides; spot-treat only; or one-time rescue operation
- Advice to customer on mowing and watering practices

Some companies offer organic fertilizer while others use synthetic fertilizers for this program.