

Healthy Lawns for Healthy Families

Calendar for Basic Organic Lawn Care

March-April

Test soil (www.umass.edu/plsoils/soiltest/soilbrocha.htm)

Remove leaves and debris – use for compost

Evaluate and remove thatch (buildup of dead grass and leaves)

Sharpen mower blade

First mowing of year should be at about 2 inches and remove clippings

Subsequent mowing: raise mower blade to leave grass at 3 inches

Only remove 1/3 of blade at a time

Re-seed bare patches and top dress with compost to establish grass

Add amendments based on soil test results

If pH is <6.8, add quick release dolomitic lime (no lead)

Top-dress with ¼” compost or add slow release fertilizer (low NPK ratios)

Apply corn gluten as pre-emergent for weed control (*do not apply same time as seeding*)

May-June

Keep mower blades sharp and leave grass at 3 inch finished height

Only remove 1/3 of blade at a time

Check for weeds

Pull by hand or treat with mixture of 1 part lemon juice to 2 parts vinegar

Re-seed bare spots, top dress with ¼” compost

Leave clippings on the lawn

Minimize lawn watering to encourage deep roots

July-August

Check for insect damage

For grubs, Treat with milky spore (soil T should be >60°) or add beneficial nematodes

Keep grass at 3” tall

Water only as needed

Allow grass to go dormant during drought

September-October

Best time to seed

Fertilize with slow release fertilizer or top-dress with ¼” compost

Aerate if necessary

November

Continue to mow while grass grows

Remove leaves- use for compost



Partners in the ***Healthy Lawns for Healthy Families*** project include the Towns of Acton, Carlisle, Chelmsford, Concord, Littleton, and Westford. Garden center participants include Jones Farm, Parlee’s Pine Hill Nursery, and Laughton’s Nursery-Chelmsford, Eric’s Greenhouse and Garden Center-Westford, Butterbrook Farms-Acton, Bird House Garden Center-Boxborough, Mahoney’s Garden Center and Millbrook Farms-Concord, Cupp & Cupp Nursery and Cataldo Nurseries-Littleton. This project has been supported by a grant from the UMass-Lowell Toxics Use Reduction Institute