



Digging It!

August, 2012

Dry, Dusty and Dead?

Rain! Just when we were about to give up on our lawns, they have woken out of their dusty dormancy to a bright, green day. With the pending climate change we may well be in for more summers like this one. We need to prepare our lawns.

In order to have the ability to rebound from drought conditions the turfgrass roots in our lawns need to be good.

There are many causes for poor root growth. You may be mowing your grass too short or too often. You may need to remove excessive thatch from your lawn. The soil may be excessively warm, compacted or waterlogged. The soil's PH may be below 5.0, have excessive nitrogen or lack available potassium. To decide on what amendments you need you can buy a kit from your local garden centre or contact OMAFRA in Guelph for more thorough Testing.



We have discussed the importance of watering in the early morning (see July issue of Digging It) but an even watering from your sprinkler is also critical. Do not leave it on for hours in one spot. To check the efficiency of your sprinkler place opened salmon tins at five, ten and fifteen feet from your sprinkler. You need one inch of water at fifteen feet to water lawn efficiently. Too much as waterlogged and compacted soils greatly limit air exchange. People use either core or spike aeration to add air.

The type of lawn you grow depends of your usage and expected maintenance. Keep in mind that most bags of grass seed contain a mixture of several kinds of seeds. Medium- Kentucky Blue Grass grows well in full sun, well drained, moist, slightly acid, soil. It needs lots of

regular watering or it will go dormant and turn brown.

Low to Medium- Creeping Red Fescue is Very drought resistant. It grows well in sun or partial shade in well-drained sandy or acidic soil.

Medium- Perennial Rye Grass is a bunch type of turfgrass with high water needs. It likes full sun to partial shade in moist, fertile, well-drained soil.

Inspite of your best intentions chinch bugs may have left large dry sunken patches your lawn. Identify this problem by sinking a can open at both ends into the ground and filled with water. If you have chinch bugs they will float to the top. Apply an insecticide from your local garden centre to eliminate this problem.

If you drive through any neighborhood, no two lawns are alike. But your lawn can look better with some good planning. (For more ideas towards a healthy lawn contact:

www.healthylawns.net.)

John Crow, Master Gardener

August TO DO List

- Reduce fertilization to allow plants ample time to harden off before winter.
- Continue to water during dry spells.
- Deadhead annuals and perennials to encourage new growth.
- Keep an eye open for pests that may be planning to hibernate in the debris around your plants.
- Seed areas of the lawn that are thin or dead. Keep the seed well watered while germinating.
- Propagate from seeds or cuttings.
- Some perennials may be ready to divide.

Tip of the Month:

The Japanese Beetles are stripping many plants clean. Beware of using Beetle traps as they will attract more beetles to your garden! Consider spraying plants with soapy water. With more limited effectiveness try companion planting with catnip, garlic, chives and tansy. Natural predators include the anchor bug and blue-winged wasp.

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Editor Cherin Harris-Tuck

To Subscribe/Unsubscribe please contact therealdirt@rogers.com



Master Gardeners of Simcoe County

Where to find us for free gardening advice!

Monday, 13 August, 2012 Oro-Medonte at the Guthrie Community Centre.
PickSmart with Linda Peacock, Ada Malcomson, Joan Nieman-Agapas. Start time: 7:30 pm

*Common thing is a grass blade small,
Crushed by the feet that pass,
But all the dwarfs and giants tall,
Working til doomsday shadows fall
Can't make a blade of grass.*

Wonderful, J. S. Cutler

Ask a Master Gardener books containing answers to your most common gardening questions are available at any of these speaking engagements for only \$10 or Gardening Guides for only \$1. Valuable references for you or as gifts for a gardening friend!



For information on arranging a lecture for your group please contact Joan Nieman-Agapas 705-721-9088 or email her at jnabarrie@yahoo.ca. For more information on Master