

## Natural Lawn Care is Actually Superior

Nature provides us with beautiful lawns to enjoy and appreciate, and we have a responsibility to care for them. The irony is that some of the traditional lawn care products that were designed to enhance our lawns, are actually killing them.

The U.S. National Wildlife Federation reports that where pesticide is used, 60 to 90 percent of earthworms are killed. Earthworms are vital for healthy soil, and act as very good indicators that the soil in your lawn is healthy enough to support the growth of vibrant green grass. While the use of pesticides is intended to protect your lawn from pests, these chemical treatments are actually killing earthworms and creating a serious environmental disruption.

Practicing natural lawn care will reduce the tendency to be dependant on chemical fertilizers and pest controls. Organic lawn care creates a healthy lawn that is naturally resistant to disease, insects and weeds. Follow these natural lawn care basics to create a beautiful, earthworm-friendly lawn:

### Soil Improvement

Natural lawn care begins and ends with healthy soil. Start your natural lawn care regime by testing the pH level of the soil. The ideal pH level for lawn soil is between 6.5 and 7.0, giving it a slightly more acidic property than regular loam soil. If your lawn soil is not acidic enough, add some sulfur into the soil. If it is too acidic, sprinkle lime liquid over your lawn. These materials are available at many garden centers.

Soil testing is a simple process that you can do independently as part of your natural lawn care regime, with pH tester packs readily available at \$40 - \$60. If you prefer, lawn care professionals are also available to test the soil for you.

### Grass Varieties

Understanding grass varieties and their growth cycle is an important part of your natural lawn care plan. You should be aware that grasses vary in the type of climate they prefer. They may also differ according to the amount of water and nutrients they require, sun preference, shade tolerance, and the degree of traffic they can stand. If you do not know which variety of grass seed is best for your lawn, ask your local garden center to recommend the type best adapted to your area.

### Mowing

Don't give your lawn a crew cut. If you mow too short, the surface roots may become exposed, allowing the soil to dry out faster and reducing surface aeration. As a general natural lawn care rule of thumb, do not cut off more than one-third of the grass height at any one time. You may have to mow more often, but it's worth it when you discover that your lawn thrives with more frequent mowing at just the right height. Most turf grass species are healthiest when kept between 2.5 and 3.5 inches tall. It is also better for the environment.

### Watering

Thorough watering encourages the development of deep root systems, making the lawn tougher and more drought-resistant. However, it's important to let your lawn dry out before re-watering. As a general natural lawn care rule, when the grass colour looks dull and footprints stay compressed for more than a few seconds, its time to water. And why waste water by watering in the daytime?

For a truly beautiful and healthy green space, remember to "keep it green". Forget the chemical fertilizers and pesticides, and opt for easy and inexpensive natural lawn care treatments instead. You'll have a beautiful lawn, naturally.