

Follow 3 rules — get a great lawn

by STEVE HUNTER
of The Outlook staff

Some home lawns look like golf courses while others appear to be weed farms.

It is easy to grow weeds, but how does one try to achieve a lawn that looks like a golf course?

Feed, water and mowing are the three main steps to maintain a lawn. But each step requires certain procedures.

Bill Griffith, Northwest Turf Care and Scott Carter, Soter Companies, Inc., shared some of their knowledge about proper lawn maintenance.

Both experts said before you begin to feed, water and mow your lawn, it must be determined whether the lawn needs to be thatched.

"It depends on the thatch layer," said Griffith about the material that builds up between the grass and the soil. "When it gets over one-half of an inch thick — it becomes a problem because

water and nutrients can't get to the roots."

Carter said if a lawn is brown now it needs to be thatched. He recommends thatching once a year if you do not catch your grass clippings and every other year if you do use a catcher.

Spring is the best time to thatch, which means to cut the grass as low as possible and then use a thatching machine to remove the dead layer. Next, the lawn must be watered and fertilized and it takes about two weeks for it to become green and tall again.

But to keep it green, you must regular feed, water and mow.

Feed — Carter believes to get the best performance from fertilizer, it must be used every six to eight weeks from April through November.

"Most people just fertilize three times a year because of financial reasons," said Carter. "But for the best looking lawn you need to

feed it more often to maintain it and to keep diseases away."

Griffith said April and May are the ideal months to fertilize weeds because the dandelions and others are just starting to grow.

Fertilizers are available to kill just certain types of weeds and others combine weed killers and nutrients for the grass.

In order to get the grass green and make it grow, a balanced fertilizer that contains nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium should be used now on the lawn. The nitrogen greens the grass and the other two minerals help it grow.

Water — Griffith said the key is not to water too much because that is more harmful than water too little. He suggests to water in the early morning, definitely before noon.

"Don't water in the hottest part of the day," said Griffith. "The heat and water combined can burn the roots

of the grass. The evening's OK, but the lawn stays wet all night, which may cause disease."

Carter said a device called a core remover can be bought and used to determine whether the lawn needs to be watered. It pulls up two to three inches of soil and if it is dry and crumbles — water is needed.

"We have a real clay soil in this area," said Carter, "that's real slow to absorb. If you overwater, it'll wash everything into the street. So, short cycles are the best."

Mow — Carter recommends to cut the lawn once a week and never cut more than one-third of the grass leaf surface, which helps to thicken the grass and saves it from burning.

Griffith said if the grass gets too long, the lower part of the grass leaf cannot get any sunlight to help it grow. He also said to make sure the

mower blade is sharp and well-adjusted.

"While cutting, it is better to vary the traffic pattern,"

said Griffith. "If you mow the same direction it tends to lay the grass down. I cut it about three different ways."

SPECIAL BUY!



CORRY'S
KILLS
SLUGS & SNAILS

#5
REG.
\$5.99

- ★ New, Improved Formula
- ★ Attracts & Kills far more slugs and snails than other controls
- ★ Long lasting — Rain will not wash it away
- ★ Approved for Vegetable Gardens — Strawberries too!

\$4.99

Good thru April 27

HARRIS SEEDS

1313 POWELL, GRESHAM, OR.

Mon.-Sat. 8-5:00, Sun. 12-4:30 665-1168

Trees, shrubs need extra care after a hard winter

Trees and shrubs in the home landscape are often left the worse for wear after being exposed to winter wind and ice damage.

Ray McNeilan of Gresham, an Oregon State University Extension home gardening agent, says damaged trees and shrubs stand a better chance of healthy recovery if given prompt care.

Where broken limbs are concerned — if the limb didn't tear the tree bark when it broke off — the damage is comparatively minor, McNeilan says. Remove any portion of the limb that is still attached to the tree trunk using proper pruning procedures.

Repairing injuries where limbs have broken off the tree and damaged the trunk are more complicated, according to McNeilan. The rough edges of the trunk wound must be smoothed down and straightened with a sharp knife. Then shape the wound into a vertical oval to permit a smooth flow of sap around it. This will promote faster healing. A wood chisel may be needed to smooth the exposed sap-wood.

There are many sealing compounds available for sealing trunk wounds. McNeilan suggests checking with local garden or nursery stores for recommendations on the most effective types.

BALI BLINDS
Colors of Spring

SALE-A-BRATION
SAVE 40%

When you buy Bali Custom Mini Blinds at Gresham Decor Center Limited Time Offer

PLUS... Enter the Bali Blinds® Colors of Spring Sweepstakes Over \$10,000 in prizes!

Come in for details

GRESHAM DECOR CENTER

 1455 NE Burnside, Gresham, 667-3648



PLANT A DEPOSIT & WATCH IT GROW

Join Your Community Credit Union — Open To All Who Live Or Work In East County.

LOW COST

- ★ Checking
- ★ Consumer Loans

HIGH-YIELDING

- ★ Certificates
- ★ Money-Market Accounts



Mountain View
FEDERAL CREDIT UNION



Burnside at Powell in the Gresham Village, P.O. Box 667, Gresham, Oregon 97030.

(503) 665-8185