



Tips for Maintaining Lawns on Sandy Soil

The month of April has been designated National Lawn Care Month by the National Association of Landscape Professionals (NALP). A 2016 survey by the NALP showed that 1 in 3 respondents don't know how often their lawn should be watered.

Although we encourage you to plant low water use ground covers instead of lawns, we understand that you may choose to have a lawn. If you decide to have a lawn, please follow the tips below that will help you keep the lawn healthy and reduce water use.

Develop Healthy, Rich Soil:

Our sandy soil drains extremely well, but it doesn't have the organic matter and nutrients needed for the grass to thrive. Before you plant the lawn, amend the soil deeply with lots of compost. An annual application of additional organic compost will help maintain sufficient levels of organic matter.

Species Selection:

Being able to maintain a lawn in sandy soil largely depends on the species chosen. Select proven, tough, and rugged varieties of tall fescue that grow aggressively and have improved drought tolerance.

Irrigation:

When you water in sandy soil:

- Water more frequently and in smaller amounts
- Water just long enough to thoroughly wet the rootzone
- Wait to irrigate again until the first signs of stress
- Utilize a soil moisture sensor so you don't over water

Two watering events per week should be adequate in our climate. During warm periods, one additional irrigation event may be needed.

Follow this link below to see our suggested watering frequency and duration:
[Landscape Watering Guide](#)

De-thatching:

Raking your lawn, or de-thatching, helps remove the impermeable layer of dead grass that builds up on the surface of the lawn over time.

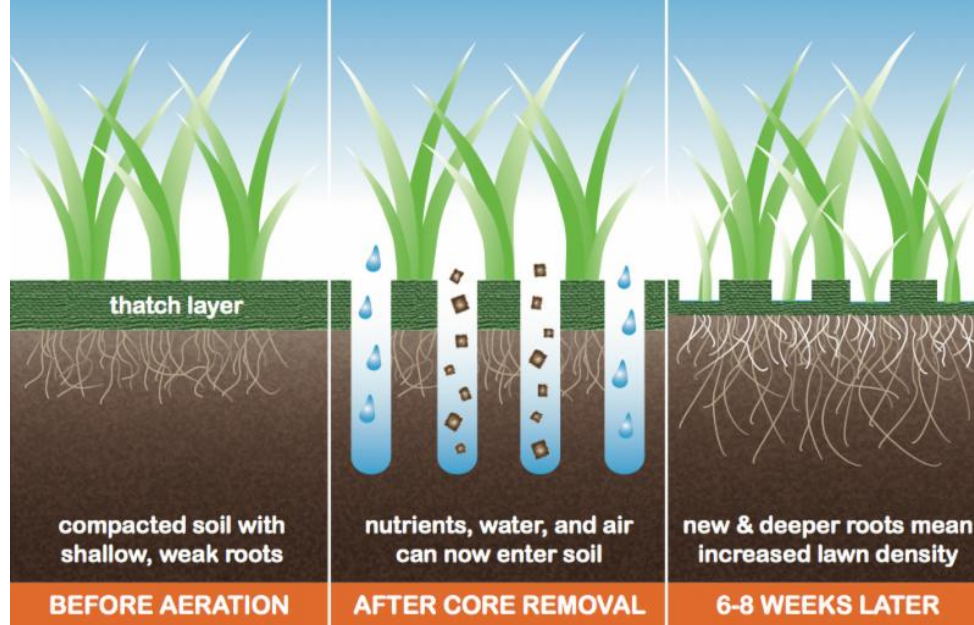
This practice is commonly done in the early fall to prepare the lawn for the application of fertilizer and pre-emergent herbicides.



Aeration:

Aerating your lawn is the process of removing small plugs of thatch and soil to allow air, water, and nutrients to move throughout the root zone.

This maintenance practice helps reduce soil compaction and thatch accumulation. The results are a stronger, thicker, more vigorous lawn.



Mowing:

- Don't scalp the lawn. Encourage a deep root system by keeping the grass blades long.
- Make sure your mower blade is sharp. Dull blades tear grass which creates openings for pests and diseases to enter the grass blades.
- Practice grass-cycling, incorporating the grass clippings into the lawn. Grass clippings can provide up to 25% of your lawn's fertilizer needs. This technique works best with grass that's mowed frequently.
- Avoid mowing in the same pattern or direction each time you mow. This can cause compaction and create ruts.

Fertilization:

Lawns growing in sandy soil need frequent fertilizer applications, but in small amounts. It is important to use slow release forms of nitrogen to reduce chances of nitrogen movement down through the soil profile. Choose a fertilizer that has a high amount of potassium, an essential element lacking in our sandy soils.

To learn more about maintaining your lawn on sandy soils, please visit the link below:

[Maintaining Lawns on Sandy Soil](#)

Need assistance with programming your irrigation controller?

Please contact our Water Conservation Specialist to help you schedule or adjust your irrigation events.

