

TIPS FOR IMPROVING THE LONG TERM HEALTH OF YOUR LAWN.

Proper care of an established lawn does more than affect the immediate appearance of the turf; it also affects the turf's long-term health and ability to resist pest attacks. Follow this tip to help meet these goals.

PROPER MOWING

Mowing is the most frequent maintenance operation carried out on a lawn. How your lawn is mowed can greatly affect the health of the grass.

For optimal health, the mowing height should be set at 2½ - 3 inches (65 – 75mm). The height of the mower setting largely controls the depth of the roots. Using higher mower settings leads to a deeper, more extensive root system. The result is a healthy turf, better able to compete with weeds, resist insect attack and withstand environmental stress such as drought and temperature extremes.

To minimize stress, no more than one third of the portion of the grass blades above the surface should be cut at any one mowing. This is known as the “1/3 rule”. Following this rule means that mowing frequency should be based on the rate of growth, rather than the calendar. During peak growing periods, this could mean mowing twice a week.

Using sharp mower blades is very important. This ensures a clean cut, which improves the appearance and is better for the health of the grass plants. Using a dull blade tears the leaves, leaving a jagged or frayed wound that stresses the plant. This, in turn, increases moisture loss and gives the lawn a brownish cast for several days after mowing. These jagged “tears” take longer to heal and can increase possible exposure to turf disease.

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