

TURF TIDBITS



Your Turf Management Professionals

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Spring Raking

The differences between Hand Raking, Spring Clean-Up, Power Raking, and Aeration



We started entering lawns recently and we are noticing a high amount of winter debris that needs to get raked out. **RAKING** - aggressively hand raking through the yard every spring is so important as it rids the lawn of all the dead, matted down grass and other debris left over from winter such as leaves, sticks, rocks, etc. If this stuff stays there, it'll get in the way of sunlight, water, and fertilizer. But it'll also impede the existing grass from spreading out.

We recommend an aggressive hand raking or a spring clean up every spring, and an aeration every other fall. If these practices are not done, you may be wondering, come June, why your lawn hasn't improved much. That's because if all that debris just sits there, it'll get in the way of good growth by hindering fertilizer & water uptake & root development.

Other spring clean up verbiage:

- **Spring clean-up:** a shallow power raking (see next bullet point) to drudge up the below-ground thatch layer and also the above-ground debris layer. The lawn then gets mowed and bagged to clean up the debris.
- **Power Raking:** a metal-tined machine drags through the soil. Can be set for shallow or deep. Can also be quite aggressive. Proceed w/caution and use on lawns of at least 5 yrs old.
- **Aeration:** a machine punctures holes in the ground thus reducing the below-ground thatch layer, relieving compaction, and providing a channel for water & fertilizer

SPRING TO-DO LIST

LAWN:

- **Get the garden rake ready!** Aggressively hand rake through the lawn sometime in late March or early April to rid the lawn of the dead, matted down grass. This allows much **BETTER** growth throughout the year. Then bag the clippings to "vacuum" the debris. (see article to the left for more information on raking)
- If you're **doing any re-seeding**, give us a call to let us know so we can avoid these areas with our crabgrass preventer.
- **Check your journal** from last year and tackle any plans you wanted to accomplish for this year. If you don't have a journal, have fun starting one! It's great for lawn and garden ideas that might otherwise be easily forgotten.
- Look for **low, settled areas** maybe from excessive dripping water, where a stump was ground down, or erosion. Haul in some good quality dirt to level these areas out and re-seed.

GARDEN:

- **Prune** trees & shrubs, EXCEPT spring flowering shrubs like forsythia or lilac. (hold off on pruning dogwood, maples, and birches until later spring, to reduce excessive sap from bleeding out. Don't prune walnut or oaks to reduce the threat of disease)
- **Go shopping!** All the nurseries and garden centers are getting full of supplies!
- Start your **seeds!** Get a jump start on early season veggies like radishes, peas, broccoli & cauliflower. Transplant outside as soon as you're able to work the ground. They can withstand frosty weather.
- Begin to **cut back** any dead stems from your perennials. Level everything to the ground except grasses and Russian sage (cut them to about 6" for best results.)

HOME:

- If you noticed blue/white fuzzies on the snow by your dryer vent this last winter it may be time to **clean the vent tube**.
- Start to bring **tropicals** out of dormancy by getting them to a sunny window, increasing water and fertilizer.
- Continually check **houseplants** for insects or disease.
- Weekly, turn houseplants ¼ turn for even growth.



MOLES vs. VOLES

Moles are rodents that feed on insects, earth worms, and grubs underground (insectivore). They forage for those insects by digging and pushing themselves through the dirt; making an underground tunnel. In doing this, they sever the grass roots & raise the sod causing the grass above their tunnel to die. So the damage looks like a 4" wide tunnel with dead grass on top (the tunnel is about as wide as your shoe). The tunnel is also soft; so soft that it can be pushed back down by stepping on it.

How to fix the problem: Green 4 Ever can help rid your lawn of moles through the use of mole bait, which kills the mole. We can also kill their food source. Moles eat underground insects such as grubs. So you may have a grub infestation. By treating the grubs with an insecticide, we will be decreasing the mole's food supply, thus decreasing mole activity. Rake up any dead grass and overseed bare spots.

Voles are small rodents (field mouse) that eat tree bark, grass, and other vegetation (herbivore). Most vole damage occurs during the winter months because it is easier for them to obtain their food while being protected by snow cover. When the weather warms up and the snow melts, you'll see the damage. It looks like a 1"-2" wide, above-ground trail where the grass blades have been chewed off (the trails are a little bit wider than your thumb). The trails are not soft and the sod has not been raised, like it is with mole damage (see above). Also during this time of year, more predators (snakes, owls, hawks) are abundant so the vole damage will diminish as the voles will look for other places to hide.

How to fix the problem: The voles will make their way out of your yard when the snow melts. But if you have a few that are still lingering around, you can buy anything that you would buy to get rid of a mouse, such as traps, and place them through the yard (being careful of outside pets). Then, once they're gone, thoroughly rake through the area to get rid of the chewed off grass. The good news is that the voles do not KILL the grass! They just stunt it for a couple of weeks. With good raking, fertilization, and watering it'll be caught up with the rest of the yard in a couple of weeks. To help lower your risks of getting them again, rake leaves, mow short and use a vole bait in the late fall.



Mole damage - 4"-6" wide, SOFT, underground tunnels. Large areas may need to be reseeded to become established again. Kill the moles with poisonous bait or kill their food source with the Preventative Grub Control.



Vole damage - 1"-2" wide above-ground tunnels. Voles don't eat the crown or the roots, so the grass is still alive! It just takes a couple weeks for it to recover and catch up to the rest of the lawn.



ARBOR DAY!!

Arbor Day was [April 27th](#) but because of the delayed spring not a lot of people were ready to be planting.

It's not too late! Go to a local nursery and purchase a tree to plant ANY time this spring!

The origin of Arbor Day lies in the 19th century. The driving force behind National Arbor Day was J. Sterling Morton. The history of Arbor Day is a history of the celebration of the importance of trees to human life. The history of Arbor Day is thus part of the modern movement towards awareness that we may need to cultivate "nature" a bit in order to preserve it.

#SnowPocalypse2018

If you were lucky enough to be around the Sioux Empire a couple weeks ago, you were part of a record-breaking blizzard. If you weren't around, you were probably somewhere warm and hearing about the blizzard from friends!! BRRrrrrr

According to news stations like KDLT, the April Blizzard of 2018 will go down in history. Check out some of the records that were broken here: <http://www.kdlt.com/2018/04/16/recap-april-2018-blizzard/>
 What does this mean for the lawn and garden? Well, the blizzard definitely delayed spring by a few weeks. We are about 3 weeks behind, Mother Nature, and we are not happy! The cooler temps made it hard for the snow to melt, but it finally did and we can now FINALLY enjoy spring. They are predicting cooler than normal temps for a few more weeks. **Now is the time to do your spring lawn raking, your landscape clean up, or any seeding.**



Appreciate these sunny, warm, beautiful days while we can. ☺



Winter BURN



Boxwood winter burn



Arborvitae winter burn



Yew winter burn

It's very common this time of year to see winter burn on some of our favorite evergreen plants in the landscaping. Winter burn is also called winter injury, winter kill, or winter desiccation.

It all means the same, but what does it really mean and how can you help to avoid it?

Evergreens stay green year round and rely on the moisture in their root systems and leaves/needles to get them through the winter. But in our region, the ground freezes, and so can parts of the root ball of the plant. When this happens they can't take up nearly as much water as when the ground is thawed, so they only have the moisture in their leaves/needles to help them through. However, an evergreen leaf/needle isn't very full of water. So, with our extremely **COLD**, **DRY**, and **WINDY** winters, it sucks the moisture right out of those needles. When the evergreen can't keep more water in its system than what's being taken away from that weather, winter burn happens. *The 3 most common evergreens that suffer from winter burn are pictured above)*

Here are some ways to help avoid these problems:

- Find other, more hardy plants that can overwinter without problems or risk of injury.
- If you really want the evergreen, plant it in a sheltered area where the blustery N & W winds won't get to it.
- Make a burlap screen using burlap and a few fence posts to help protect the plant.
- No matter where you plant it, you'll want to water the plant properly throughout the season, then decrease watering in Sept to harden the plant off & then give it heavy waterings in Oct until frost.
- You can purchase Wilt-Pruf at your local garden center to spray on the needles for extra protection.

