

TURF TIDBITS



Your Turf Management Professionals

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ARBOR DAY!!

Plant a tree for Arbor Day.

Mark your calendars for **April 24th**!

Arbor Day is a national celebration of nature that encourages **tree planting**.

The origin of Arbor Day dates back to April 10th, 1872 when J. Sterling Morton, President Cleveland's Secretary of Ag, steam-headed the planting of 1 million trees in Nebraska! The history of Arbor Day is a history of the celebration of the importance of trees to human life. It's a modern movement towards awareness that we may need to cultivate "nature" a bit in order to preserve it.

VOLES



Voles are little field mice that eat plant material such as grass & tree bark. They come into our

lawns in the late fall & take up a winter residency under the protection of snow. In the spring you'll see their squiggly trails in the lawn that look like this:



Vole trails are narrow, only as wide as your thumb.

Fix it: Voles will usually leave the lawn & go to ditches & fields once the snow melts. The lawn may look rough, but it's not dead. The voles don't disturb the crown or roots, so all you have to do is rake through the trail area to remove any dead clippings & within a couple of weeks it'll recover.

Prevent it: In the late fall, make your lawn more uninhabitable to these creatures by removing their yummy vegetation choices. This means, cut down your landscaping perennials, wrap your tree trunks, do a short final mow, rake leaves & get our Vole & Rodent Repellent applied to the lawn.

MOLES



Moles are small rodents that live underground eating earthworms, grubs & other underground insects. They can come into our lawns at any time during the growing season.

After a mole has been in your lawn, you'll see trails. Because the damage is similar to voles, many people have a hard time distinguishing between the two. Here is mole damage:



Mole trails are much wider than a vole trail and they are raised above the ground. They sink when you step on them.

Fix it: To get the mole out of the lawn apply Mole Bait or kill their food source with a Grub Control. Call us for help with this. The grass above the tunnels may have died back, so it's best to push down the heaved ground & overseed to re-establish the turf.

Prevent it: Make your lawn more uninhabitable to these rodents by applying a Preventative Grub Control which reduces their food source, thus driving them elsewhere

Spring

SPRING TO-DO LIST

LAWN:

- **Get the garden rake ready!** Aggressively hand rake through the lawn sometime in the spring, 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.
- **Apply Pre-Emergent.** Pre-emergent (also called crabgrass preventative) applied around the time the lilacs are blooming will prevent unsightly and aggressive weeds such as crabgrass, foxtail, and other annual grassy weeds from sprouting
- If you’re **doing any re-seeding**, avoid these areas with the pre-emergent to avoid grass seed damage.
- **Fertilize!** Get a jump-start on the spring green-up by fertilizing with a balanced fertilizer
- **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 to reduce excessive sap from bleeding out. Don’t prune walnut or oaks to reduce the threat of disease)
- Begin to **cut back** any dead stems from your perennials. Level perennials to the ground except grasses and Russian sage (cut them to about 6” for best results.)
- **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.
- **Amend the soil** in your garden. Till in soil-additives such as untreated and free-of-disease leaves, twigs, sand, compost from your bin, or peat moss
- **Enjoy the sunshine!** 😊



Spring Raking

When we visit lawns in this spring, we usually notice that many of them would benefit from a spring raking. Here are the different methods.

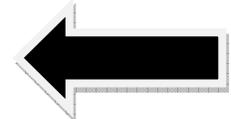
- **Spring Clean-up** - A gentler raking that gets the lawn ready for the season, by getting rid of all the dead, matted grass in addition to any debris such as sticks, leaves, rocks, etc. The yard is then mowed so the debris can be bagged and discarded. This should be done before any crabgrass preventer gets applied.
- **De-thatching** - the act of removing a portion of the thatch layer, which is underground. Techniques used are core aeration and power raking (see below). Aerations are much gentler on the lawn compared to power raking. Aerations are recommended every other year for those on a lawn care program. Power raking is recommended every 5-7 years.
- **Hand Raking** - The act of taking a normal garden rake and raking through the yard. This is recommended in the fall to pick up the fallen leaves, **but also every spring**. This method also rids the lawn of the dead, matted grass as well as any other debris left over from winter. After hand raking, you want to bag the clippings, to “vacuum” the debris.
- **Power Raking** - A form of de-thatching. A machine drops metal tines in the soil about 3-4” deep. The tines gets pushed through the soil, drudging up A LOT of dead, matted down grass, and debris, but also good stuff such as root systems, and grass that’s alive and healthy. This is not recommended for lawns less than 5 years old.

We recommend an aggressive hand raking or a spring clean up every spring, to rid the lawn of debris. If this is 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 root development and water and fertilizer uptake.

This picture is a good example of hand raking. Raking is so important in the spring! (See article to the left)



Is there really a difference in spring clean-up, de-thatching, hand raking, & power raking?
The answer is YES.





IMPORTANT SEEDING INFO FOR SPRING:

Thinking of overseeding soon? Although the best time of year to seed is in the early fall (around Labor Day), spring seeding can still be beneficial as long as the seed stays moist every day until it germinates **and** as long as you do not receive any crabgrass preventative (pre-emergent). If you get crabgrass preventative put down with your spring lawn application, it will stop the growth of the grass seed, too. Keep in mind that even without receiving the crabgrass preventative, the tender grass seedlings are going to be trying to start their root system in the heat of summer. It's simply tough on them. Seeding in the spring means you'll have to baby that tender grass with plenty of water through the summer. A proper seeding watering schedule would be 2-3 times per day until the seed germinates, then once a day for about a month, then every other day for another month. By the end of summer you can be down to 2 times per week, ½ inch time. If you'd like a quote for overseeding just let us know.

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 1-2 heavy waterings in Oct until frost.
- You can purchase Wilt-Pruf at your local garden center to spray on the needles for extra protection.

