

Getting Your Lawn Ready for Spring

Here are a few tips to help get your lawn off to a healthy start and recover from a long hard winter.

Raking:

Light raking once the turf has dried can help increase green up in spring by increasing air and sun to the grass plants. Although, most people over rake their lawn, and it only needs a harder raking where areas are matted from the snow or have collected debris of leaves and sticks etc. Hard raking which is often the tendency can rip out the tender shoots of the new grass trying to come in and actually delay your lawns recovery from winter. This damage can also occur when raking wet turf. The light raking will also against snow mold fungus which is the grayish matted areas lawns get coming out of winter.

Vole Damage:

Voles are often confused with Moles. We have very little mole damage in the Fox Valley mainly due to our heavy clays. Moles tunnel into the earth and tend to sleep through the winter. Voles also called meadow mice are the active ones making narrow runways through our lawns (especially where snow has accumulated) and feed on many of our shrubs. You do not typically have to reseed vole damage areas since the grass roots are not damaged. Raking off the top dead grass and getting air, and sun to these areas will speed their recovery and the lawn will grow back from the established root system of the grass plants.

Fertilizing:

Spring fertilizing of lawns help turf recover from winter and get it growing. The timing, amounts and types of fertilizer can vary depending upon what you want your lawn to look like; its nutritional needs, sun vs. shade environments and what type of fertilizing schedule you have been on in the past. Producing a nice lawn is more than just putting down fertilizer throughout the year. Knowing your lawn and its needs is something Ranger Services strives to do in order to produce sound agronomical lawn care programs. Spring fertilization applications are typically applied in April and May but the type of spring can have that vary. Applying fertilizer as soon as the snow melts is not a good practice and can result in runoff of the fertilizer if the turf is not up and growing yet.

Pre-emergent Crabgrass Control:

Crabgrass in the Fox Valley typically begins germination in early to Mid June although in later springs it has been as late as mid July. The belief that one must have crabgrass pre-emergent

down as soon as possible in the spring is false and is often be used up before the crabgrass even germinates if it is applied too early. Ranger Services includes pre-emergent crabgrass control with its spring fertilizer applications.

Core Aeration:

Core Aeration in spring can help a compacted lawn recover from winter. It can also be used to help in lawn renovation or reseeding projects. Core aeration helps increase pore space in the soil and can help rejuvenate a lawn. If a lawn is slow in winter recovery core aeration may help it.

Mowing:

Getting your mower tuned up and the blade sharpened will actually help your turf. A sharp mower blade reduces water loss in the grass blades and actually helps keep a lawn greener. Mowing at 2.5 inches in the spring will also help your lawn recovery from winter. You can always reduce the mower height a little in spring after the first couple of mowings if it is too difficult to keep up with the cutting. In summer a 2.5 -3.0 inch mowing height is recommended.

Don't hesitate to [contact Ranger Services](#) with any lawn care questions