



1-800-331-1746

arborlawn.com

MOWING PRACTICES

MOWING FREQUENCY

A general rule of thumb is not to remove more than one-third of the total leaf surface when mowing your lawn. This may require mowing every four to five days during rapid growth in the spring. Removing more than one-third of total leaf surface can severely injure the grass plant by decreasing its ability to support its underground portions. Excessive accumulation of clippings from infrequent mowing may smother the turf and should be removed.

Mowing is the most basic practice for maintaining lawn turf. Mowing performed at the correct height and frequency is essential to the health and density of the stand. Removing leaf tips induces plants to form new sprouts, increasing stand density. Mowing can affect water quality, also. A healthy stand can withstand more pest pressure and needs fewer pest control inputs. The denser turf cover also helps prevent soil erosion, which is an important pollution problem for the waters in the Great Lakes basin.

HEIGHT OF CUT

Turf grasses are well adapted to frequent mowing, but mowing too short will reduce the vigor of the plants by reducing their ability to manufacture food. Also, there is a direct relationship between cutting height and the amount of roots a grass plant can maintain. Lowering the mowing height reduces the root system. This restricts the ability of the plant to absorb water and nutrients. In recent years, recommendations for mowing height have steadily increased for home lawns. Current standards suggest between 2 and 3.75 inches. Higher cut lawn grasses are more stress tolerant. This is especially important during the summer heat period. Taller grass plants with higher density have a profound shading effect on the soil surface, which reduces germination of weed seeds, particularly crabgrass. This is an excellent way to reduce herbicide use, especially where the lawn is properly fertilized and watered to maintain vigor.

EQUIPMENT

The key to a quality cut with any style mower is to use a sharp, well adjusted mower. Dull, poorly adjusted equipment tears rather than cuts the grass, leaving a ready site for disease invasion and giving the lawn a frayed, brownish look. The frequency of changing the blade is up to you. Many professional turf managers change blades daily, but once a month would be a good start. For best results, mow when the turf is dry; this will also eliminate clumping. Varying the mowing direction from time to time can reduce wear patterns.