

VAN DUYNHOVEN GARDEN SERVICES LTD.

MOSS IN LAWNS:

Moss is an indicator of turf problems and is not usually the cause. There is more than one type of moss, each reflecting a certain problem. Several site conditions which can allow for moss are:

1. low soil ph
2. too much shade
3. poor drainage
4. compacted soil
5. lawns allowed to dry out in the summer
6. low fertility in soil
7. mowing too low
8. result of previous disease, or insect problem such as leather jackets

With our wet environment moss will always be a problem. Basically we need to improve the lawn growth to out compete the moss. A lush lawn is less likely to have moss or weed.

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WHAT CAN BE DONE:

1. Liming to increase the soil ph. Liming also helps improve the rooting depth of lawns and the ability to handle drought.
2. Over seeding with new shade tolerant grasses.
3. Thinning overhead vegetation to allow more light through.
4. Drainage problems vary depending on the soil type, the grade, and compaction. Top dressing with a sand or a very finely screened sandy loam can help improve heavy soils and damp areas. Areas with standing water may require more drastic repairs such as re-grading, or sub surface drainage.
5. Aerating is very important. It reduces compaction, improves uptake of water, air, and fertilizer, and it improves rooting depth which in turn improves drought hardiness.

6. Preventing lawn areas from drying out during warm periods reduces the chance for moss and weeds to out compete.
7. Mowing lawns higher, especially in shady areas, can reduce certain compact mosses.
8. Low fertility is generally not a problem on well fertilized lawns but areas with a lot of surface roots from trees or shrubs can rob and out compete the lawn for nutrients.
9. Using a moss killer alone will set the moss back but not remove it. The areas which were moss will become moss or weed again. Using a moss killer with fertilizer will set the moss back and stimulate the lawn but again it will not put lawn in areas which were mossy.
10. Power raking can mechanically remove moss from the lawn areas, allowing the lawn time to out compete.

POWER RAKING:

Power raking is done to remove not only moss but thatch as well. Lawns benefit from power raking on a regular basis such as every two to three years. We recommend killing the moss first before power raking other wise power raking will simply spread the moss spores around. Lawns power raked regularly generally do not need to be top dressed every time. Lawns which have not been power raked for some time may not have much lawn left after power raking and may require top dressing and over seeding. This can be much more expensive than just a power raking.

The general procedure for power raking is:

1. liming
2. fertilizing with a moss control - usually 1 month after the lime
3. weed kill - may require 2 sprays
4. cutting the lawn very close
5. power raking in several directions
6. removal of moss and thatch
7. aerating - if not done yet
8. top dressing with a finely screened sandy loam - this helps to break down

any remaining thatch or moss and acts as a seed bed

9. over seeding with appropriate seed mix
10. fertilizing with a turf starter fertilizer
11. rolling
12. setting up the irrigation - the seed must not be allowed to dry out once germination begins
13. touch up seeding

WHAT TO EXPECT:

Even a light power rake will set a lawn back. Lawns with little moss or thatch will bounce back fairly quick. Lawns which had a lot of moss may have very little existing grass left with plenty of bare areas. This will look even worse than it is with the top dressing.

Seed germination varies depending on the seed used. Shade seed tends to germinate in about 1-2 weeks while estate lawn seed may require up to 3 weeks. The seed must not be allowed to dry out. The existing lawn will be recovering during this period which helps keep the seed shaded and moist.

Within a month the lawn should return lush and green. There will be some touch up seeding necessary but watering is less crucial as the surrounding grass helps retain moisture and provides shade.

After the lawn returns it is important to do as much as possible to improve the site conditions. One of the most important is a proper fertilizer schedule in order to keep the lawn lush and strong.