

# General Lawn Tips

These general lawn tips will help you have a healthy lawn. Healthy lawns are more disease and pest-resistant, so you should need less chemical inputs to maintain them.

## Mowing & Watering Tips



Credit: Clean Water MN

Keep turf 3" tall.

Mow with a sharp blade.

Change mowing direction often.

Never cut off more than a third of the turf height at a time.

Discharge clippings to lawn, and sweep any clippings that got onto hard surfaces back onto the lawn.

Water your lawn deeply (1") once a week if it hasn't rained.

## Fertilizing & Aerating Tips

Use nature's fertilizer! Mulch leaf clippings & leaves into your lawn with your mower.



Credit: "Mowing Fall Leaves in a Spiral" by Bill Smith, Flickr

Before adding any extra fertilizer, test your soil at the U of MN to see if you need it.

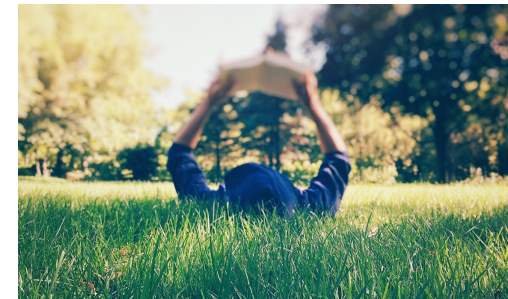
If your soil test indicates you need fertilizer, apply around Labor Day and after aeration.

Stick a pencil in your lawn to see if you need aeration-you do if it doesn't slide in easily. Aerate with a core aerator.

# Safer Lawn Care

Protect the health of your family & the environment

Reduce lawn chemical use



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## How to be Safer

Lawn chemicals have the potential to be dangerous to human & animal health. Those that are improperly applied can also run off lawns with rain or snowmelt and be carried into local waterbodies like lakes and streams.

## Making the Best Choice

Always start with pest control methods that don't use chemicals. These methods are generally safer.

If you're going to use chemicals, try those recommended in this brochure and its references first. If they don't meet your needs, look for products that will. Pick the ones that will cause the least environmental damage.

Don't assume organic chemicals are the best choice; some can actually be quite dangerous. This brochure's references are good places to start your research!

## Tips for Using Chemicals

Spot treat; avoid weed & feed.

Always read & follow the label.

Buy the smallest amount of chemical you need & use it up.

Don't apply if it's windy, over 85°F, or if it'll rain in the next 48 hrs.

Use contact herbicides/insecticides instead of systemic ones.

[The exception to this is if you're fighting grubs.](#)

Take old chemicals to Household Hazardous Waste Facilities.

[Anoka County Household Hazardous Waste: 763-324-3400](#)



## Safer Weed Controls

### Non-Chemical



### Regular Hand Weeding

A safe, effective way to remove weeds. You keep weeds from growing deep roots if you do it often. Many weeds will return unless the roots & all parts of the plant are removed.

### Solarization

This method kills patches of lawn & removes soil disease. Cut grass as low as possible (2" or lower), water the area, then cover with black or clear plastic for 6-8 weeks over the summer. This may also kill beneficial soil microbes.



### Chemical



### Corn Gluten Meal

This pre-emergent herbicide should be applied in a dry period in spring when the soil is 55-60°F. It can be expensive & take a few years to work. Studies are mixed on its effectiveness; however, it's also a long-acting, slow-release fertilizer.

## Brochure References

University of Minnesota Extension Lawn Care page,  
<https://extension.umn.edu/lawns-and-landscapes/lawn-care>

"The Truth About Organic Gardening: Benefits, Drawbacks & the Bottom Line" and "The Truth About Garden Remedies: What Works, What Doesn't and Why" both books by Professor Jeffrey Gillman

Front photos credit: Top-Clean Water MN, Bottom-both from Pixabay