



Tuesday, April 14, 2009

RKM TIPS: WOMR Tuesday, April 14, 2009

Today's talk is focused on lawn care, a very important early spring activity.

The majority of American homeowners—more than 33 million of them—take care of their own [lawns](#), and that number is expected to grow as consumers struggle to live on less money in this challenging economy. Still, taking care of your lawn needn't be difficult.

Here are 5 Tips from the LawnDoctor:

1. **Grass-cycle:** Simply allow grass clippings to remain on the lawn after [mowing](#). It saves time on clean-up and allows for nutrients like nitrogen, phosphorous and potassium to return to the soil as clippings decompose. This can be done easily by removing the [lawn mower](#) bag and is the ultimate organic solution in lawn care.
2. **Check thatch levels:** This is the layer of dead plant material tightly interwoven between the roots and the tops of living grass. Excessive thatch is caused by too much fertilization and over-watering. Use a soil probe or hand shovel to loosen and remove any thatch more than one-half inch thick.
3. **Apply pre-emergents:** Spring is the ideal time to control undesirable grasses like crabgrass, goosegrass and foxtail before they start to grow and cause problems. Common pre-emergents are available at home repair and hardware stores; be careful to apply as instructed.
4. **Optimize pH levels in soil:** Soil pH levels reflect nutrients available in the soil to promote healthy lawn growth. A pH level of 6.5 is ideal for most turfgrasses, where readings under 6.0 indicate additional lime is needed and a reading above 7.0 indicates the soil lacks sulfur.
5. **Check for diseases and bugs:** Following a winter thaw, a grub-damaged lawn will show large, irregular sections of brown turf that will easily detach from the soil. Replace and re-establish the turf in those areas and then treat with a grub prevention product. Disease can be more difficult to diagnose; professionals should evaluate questionable areas to determine proper treatment.