**Core Aeration Most Common Q&A’s**

**What is core aeration?**

Core aeration is a lawn care process that removes small plugs of soil from the ground. This relieves compaction, improves airflow, and allows water and nutrients to reach grass roots more effectively.

**How do I know if my lawn needs core aeration?**

If your lawn feels hard, drains poorly, develops bare patches, or has heavy foot traffic or thick thatch, it’s likely time to core aerate. Lawns with clay soil are especially prone to compaction. Each growing season is recommended.

**When is the best time to core aerate my lawn?**

* **Cool-season grasses** (like Kentucky bluegrass or fescue): Early spring or fall
* **Warm-season grasses** (like Bermuda or zoysia): Late spring to early summer  
  Timing matters—avoid core aerating during peak stress periods like mid-summer heat for cool-season grasses.

**How often should I aerate my lawn?**

* **Clay soil or high foot traffic**: Twice per year each growing season.
* **Loamy or moderate use**: Twice per year each growing season.
* **Low-traffic lawns**: Every 1-2 times per year  
  Frequency depends on your soil type and how much wear your lawn receives.
* **Sandy lawns**: Microbial aeration is recommended 2 times per year.

**What happens to the soil plugs after core aeration?**

The small plugs of soil and thatch will naturally break down over time. As they decompose, they return valuable nutrients back to the lawn.

**Can I mow or fertilize after core aeration?**

Yes! In fact, core aerating before fertilizing helps nutrients reach the root zone more effectively. Wait a day or two before mowing to allow the soil to settle.

**Do I need to water after core aerating?**

Watering after aeration is recommended. Moist soil helps roots grow deeper and encourages recovery. Just be sure not to overwater—keep the soil damp, not soggy.

**Can I over seed after core aeration?**

Absolutely! Aeration and over seeding go hand-in-hand. The holes left behind create ideal conditions for new seed to settle and grow strong, healthy roots.

**What are the benefits of a healthy lawn?**

* Healthy grass produces enough oxygen to sustain a family of four for an entire year.
* Lawns improve soil filtration, helping to purify rainwater as it seeps into the ground.
* The combined front lawns of just eight average homes can have the same cooling effect as 70 tons of air conditioning.
* Grass captures an estimated 12 million tons of dust and dirt from the atmosphere each year.
* Lawns act as a carbon sink—if grass clippings are left to decompose naturally, U.S. lawns could store up to 37 billion pounds of carbon annually.

**What are public utilities and why is it important to call to have them located?**

In many—if not most—areas, it is legally required to call for a public utility locate before beginning any digging or soil disruption. These utilities include water, gas, electric, sewer, and cable/phone lines. Over time, factors such as tree root growth can shift these lines from their original placement. For example, cable and phone lines are typically installed 4 to 6 inches deep, but studies have found them placed directly beneath the sod in some instances. Gas lines, which are usually much deeper, have been pushed closer to the surface by tree roots and have even been struck by core aerators in the past.

Electric, sewer, and water lines are generally buried well below the reach of a core aerator, though frost and soil movement can occasionally bring them closer to the surface. Because utility markings are not always 100% accurate, many areas require a safety buffer—typically two feet on either side of the marked line.

By locating public utilities before beginning work, you help ensure a safe distance is maintained, and both contractors and homeowners are protected legally. This proactive step prevents costly damage, service interruptions, and potential liability.

**When calling in public utilities, are private utilities coming from the main house going to other structures or areas, will they be located when making the call for service?**

No, private utilities are typically not located when you call your local utility locate service.

The public locate service only marks lines owned and maintained by utility companies—usually up to the meter or service connection point. Any utility lines that run from the house to detached garages, sheds, outdoor lighting, pools, irrigation systems, septic systems, or other structures are considered private utilities, and they will not be marked unless you hire a private locating service.

**What is the best way to map the property for private utilities, irrigation systems, invisible fence, or any other private utilities?**

Manually Trace Known Lines

If you know where utilities begin and end (e.g., an irrigation valve box to a sprinkler head), you can:

* Sketch the layout on graph paper or use a free mapping app or simply use a drawing or notes app with a site photo or layout image.
* Keep a Master Utility Map - Create a document or digital file that includes:
  + Diagram of the property with all known lines labeled
  + Depth estimates (if known)
  + Dates of installation or modifications
  + Photos of key junctions or utility boxes

Store both a physical, laminated copy by your irrigation control box and/or main electrical fuse box Also remember to store a digital backup to have readily available to send to your vendor.

**Should I keep my public utility marking flags?**

Yes, you can certainly reuse your public utility marking flags for future projects, such as core aeration, marking irrigation heads, or identifying private utilities. Typically, the vendor you hire will remove the flags once the project is complete and may return them to you for reuse on subsequent tasks.

Remember to discard/recycle any abundance of flags you will not use for subsequent tasks.