

"We Create The Great Outdoors!"



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LATE
SUMMER

Resurrecting a Lifeless Lawn

WHAT TO DO TO MAKE TURF LOOK LIKE NEW

At this point in the growing season, you may notice thinning turf or bare spots in your lawn and wonder what could be causing the trouble. There are plenty of possible reasons for problems like these, including:



Compacted soil



Excessive thatch



Insect or disease damage



Hot, dry weather

The good news is that your turf can be brought back to life again. Aside from sticking to proper mowing, fertilizing and watering practices, the following steps can make a world of difference.

AERATION

Compacted soil and excessive thatch can starve turf roots of the air, water and nutrients they need to grow deep and strong. Aeration can help. With this process, a machine known as a core aerator punches through your turf and pulls out plugs of soil and thatch, which are left behind to dissolve during rainfall or sprinkling. As the plugs dissolve, decomposition of the thatch layer is promoted. Plus, the holes created during aeration make it easier for air, water and nutrients to reach the roots.

OVERSEEDING (WITH AERATION)

This is a great way to thicken up thin turf areas, and it's done by broadcasting seed evenly over any spots that need

to be filled in. Overseeding always works better when there's good seed-to-soil contact. If your lawn is aerated before overseeding, the seed will have some soil to lodge in and germination rates will be improved.

SLICE SEEDING

This is the most efficient way to seed a very thin or badly damaged lawn. A slice seeder (or slit seeder) makes vertical slits in the turf and deposits grass seed directly into the soil, all in one pass. This encourages high germination rates and thicker growth.

Late summer and fall are great times for renovation practices like these, since temperatures are milder and more conducive to new growth. In addition, new grass doesn't have as much weed competition once the growing season starts winding down.

If your lawn looks like it's struggling this summer, consider these steps to help get it back on track again!



DID YOU KNOW? PLANT FACTS & FIGURES

- There are three major fruits that are native to North America. These include cranberries, blueberries and Concord grapes.



- Up to a billion grains of pollen can be released by one ragweed plant.
- Banana oil is made from petroleum, not bananas.
- Eggplants come from the thistle family.



- The first-ever patent issued for a fruit tree was obtained in 1932 by James Markham (for a peach tree).
- Rice paper isn't made from rice. It's made from a small tree (known as the rice paper plant) that grows in Taiwan.
- Roughly 85% of the planet's greenery is accounted for by the plant life in our oceans.
- Once a coffee seed is planted, it can take up to five years to yield consumable fruit.



Deck vs. Patio: Which is Right for You?

Carefully planned and installed, a deck or patio can greatly increase the value and enjoyment of your home by expanding your outdoor living space. The trick is to decide which one, and which construction materials, will fit in best with your current surroundings while meeting your goals for outdoor relaxation and entertaining.

WHEN DECIDING BETWEEN A DECK OR PATIO, HERE ARE SOME CONSIDERATIONS TO KEEP IN MIND:

Capacity – If you'll be entertaining lots of people, or if you need to hold something heavy like a hot tub, a patio makes a sturdier choice. While decks can be reinforced to hold extra weight, the reinforcements may compromise aesthetics.

Terrain – If you have a sloping yard, you may want to go with a deck. Though the ground can be built up to provide a level patio surface, this can cost extra.

Weather – How much sun, rain and snow does the site get? Too much sun can make patio surfaces unpleasant to walk on in bare feet, while rain and snow take their toll on deck materials.

ONCE YOU'VE DECIDED ON A DECK OR PATIO, YOU'LL NEED TO CHOOSE AN APPROPRIATE CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL

Decks – Synthetic decks made from recycled plastic are appealing due to their minimal maintenance requirements. Plus, they're less susceptible to insect damage, warping and splintering. Wooden decks, on the other hand, are less expensive and provide a more natural look. However, they do require periodic maintenance.

Patios – Pavers are a durable, low-maintenance choice for patio construction and come in a wide variety of styles and colors. Concrete is another option to consider, especially since the days of the dull, gray concrete slab are behind us. You might be surprised by the color and pattern choices available in concrete patios.

Remember, the last thing you want in your yard is unusable dead space. Think ahead and thoroughly research your options for a deck or patio that you can enjoy for many years to come.



5. Part of the white reflection in window is missing.
6. Light fixture is missing.
7. Soil at right has been covered with mulch.
8. Two new animal figurines have been added at right.

1. Geranium in foreground has changed to a dahlia.
2. Sprout between two geraniums in background is missing.
3. Statue of girl in background is missing.
4. Container planting has changed.

Answers to photo puzzle on back page:



Yellow Jackets? Yikes!

Yellow jackets can take the fun out of outdoor gatherings in a hurry. They're attracted to food items containing sugars, proteins and carbohydrates. Sweet foods and meats are especially enticing to them, and you can often find them hovering around picnic areas and garbage cans where these types of foods have been left behind.

As yellow jacket populations build up in the late summer, simply using a lawn mower or string trimmer can grow risky due to the potential for disturbing an underground nest. These social insects will vigorously defend their nests if they feel threatened, and unlike bees, they're capable of stinging repeatedly.

COMMON-SENSE CONTROL

One way to decrease yellow jacket activity on your property is to make your outdoor living space less appealing to them. You can do this by:

- Making sure trash bins stay tightly covered.
- Promptly disposing of empty food and beverage containers, as well as used paper plates and plastic cups.

- Keeping any grilled meat and other foods properly wrapped up and out of sight when not in use.

DESTROYING NESTS IS DANGEROUS

Yellow jackets are very aggressive, so it's usually best to leave their nests alone. Only the fertilized queen will survive through the winter, and she'll start a new nest in the spring in a different location. The rest of the yellow jackets will die off as cold weather sets in.

Sometimes, however, a nest's location makes it hazardous enough to warrant destruction. Though yellow jackets usually build their nests underground, nests can also be found under decks, in sheds, and even in the wall voids of homes. These types of nests can be destroyed with insecticides, which should be applied around dusk (when all of the pests are resting inside).

Due to the hostile nature of yellow jackets, you may want to consult a professional for safe and effective control options. Be careful out there!



Make a Splash with a Water Feature

Every property can be improved with the addition of a water feature. Not only do they make great conversation pieces, but they can help to create a more tranquil setting in your landscape when you need a place to unwind. Depending on the mood you're after, there are plenty of choices. Consider the following:

PONDS

With numerous possibilities for adding plants and wildlife, ponds bring a whole new level of interest to the landscape. These versatile water features can be simple or spectacular and come in all shapes and sizes. Keep in mind that if plants or wildlife are to be added, you'll need to consider the type of habitat they require.

FOUNTAINS

Situated in a pond or self-contained, fountains can provide a simple spray of water or a complex pattern of dancing streams. You can choose from all sorts



Water features are a great addition to any property.

of designs, including tiered fountains, cascading fountains incorporating statuary, garden wall fountains and even simple pebble fountains.

WATERFALLS

Moving water is pleasing to both the eye and the ear, and a waterfall can make your property much more relaxing. Preformed

waterfalls are available, or customized versions can be constructed using liner fabric, rocks, concrete and a pump.

No matter how big or small your property or your budget, there's a water feature option to suit every taste. Remember... even something as basic as a birdbath can have a big impact!

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Mulch can help to hold moisture in the soil.

HILLSIDE WATERING FOR NEW TREES & SHRUBS

Newly planted trees and shrubs need plenty of moisture as their roots are getting established. During the first growing season, about 1" of water per week should suffice. If there's no rainfall, a long, deep soaking once a week will do the trick.

If the new planting happens to be located on a hillside, providing adequate water can become a problem as runoff steers moisture downhill and away from the roots. In cases such as these, extra steps need to be taken to ensure efficient irrigation.

First, it helps to water only those areas directly beneath the foliage and shaded by the tree or shrub. Water applied beyond the drip line won't make it to the roots.

In addition, a layer of mulch around the base of the tree or shrub will help to conserve moisture in the soil and prevent runoff. Slower application rates using a soaker hose will also increase absorption.

Finally, if the slope is especially steep, it may be necessary to construct a dam out of raised soil on the downhill side of the planting. This will trap water as it travels downhill and give it time to soak in.

Can You Tell the Difference?

See if you can find the eight differences between the two photos. Answers are on page 2.

