

MISCELLANEOUS LAWN TIPS

from



**Ken Matthews
Garden Center**

Plant a lawn for a specific purpose, even if the purpose is strictly aesthetic. Turf is the finest texture in the garden. Use it to carpet the “outdoor room” in front of your home. You may also need turf in play areas and other spaces with light foot action. Heavy traffic requires pavement or mulch.

It is much better to have a small, good-looking lawn than a large, poorly kept one. If your time is limited, a small lawn may be all you can manage.

Shape the lawn to suit your garden. Geometric shapes look formal; free-form lines are casual.

If there are existing trees, draw the lines of your beds to encompass the trunks of the trees, leaving the lawn as unobstructed as is practical. Most grass has difficulty growing beneath trees and mowers and weed whackers can seriously damage tree trunks.

Choose mulch, shrubs or ground covers for slopes because mowing these areas is dangerous.

Lawn should be maintained at a height of 2 ½ to 3 inches. Never cut more than 1/3 of grass blades at one time. If you get behind because of rainy weather, do not try to catch up all at once – mow twice.

Leave your clippings on the lawn. If you are cutting correctly, the tops of the grass blades will dissolve almost immediately, adding nutrients to the lawn.

Keep your mower blade sharp. Professional lawn care companies sharpen their blades every other day. You should sharpen your blades at least every 3 to 4 cuttings.

Cut a different pattern in consecutive weeks, if possible. One week north to south, next week east to west, third week diagonally. This will help eliminate ruts from the wheels of your mower.

Try to separate your fertilizer and lime applications from each other by at least three weeks. If applied together, the lime will “lock up” some of the nitrogen in the fertilizer.

The best time to water is morning after the sun is up – around 8-9a.m. This will remove the dew, which is desirable. Avoid evening watering; this can lead to disease problems.