

# Maintenance of a Lawn

In periods of drought, watering can help new and existing lawns. If really dry weather follows the sowing of grass seed, water the area with a fine spray, keeping the seedbed constantly moist until the grass is about 40mm high. Once the lawn is established, sprinkle the lawn with plenty of water (*enough to reach the roots*) approx. 10-20mm at a time. This will secure a deeper root system. A little water does more harm than good although it encourages growth, it also produces a shallow root system that will wilt when under drought pressure.

## RAKING / SCARIFYING

Although relatively important it is hard work and normally one good raking / scarifying a year, in the spring, is all that is required. Use the special type of spring rake for this purpose, do not use an ordinary garden rake. This can be done by a contractor or machine from a hire company.

### THE BENEFITS OF RAKING / SCARIFYING:

1. It moves the dead grass, which prevents drainage and stunts growth.
2. It aerates into the crown of the grass plants.
3. It improves water movement to the root zone.
4. It encourages the formation of new shoots.

## SPIKING

Spiking can be done once a year however this too is hard work and only needs to be done when renovating a neglected lawn or if the soil is badly drained or compacted. It is also desirable to spike the lawn prior to top dressing in autumn. Spiking can be done with an ordinary garden fork, with a special hollow-tined machine or with a solid spoke machine.

### THE BENEFITS OF SPIKING ARE:

1. It aerates to the grass roots.
2. It improves soil drainage.
3. It stimulates the growth of new roots.
4. It makes the lawn more resistant to drought in summer.

## ROLLING

Generally, rolling does more harm than good and since most mowers have a roller on them, there is no need for further rolling. Only if the mower has no roller or is the rotary type, should a roller be considered. The roller should not weigh more than 100kg and should only be used in spring, when the surface is dry and the soil below is damp.

## TOP DRESSING

For a first rate lawn, apply a top dressing on an annual basis. The mixture is usually made up of peat, loam and sand. Minor hollows will be removed which have developed and an improved soil surface is gradually built up.

The layer of topdressing stimulates the formation of new shoots and promotes the development of runners resulting in a denser growth of grass.



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