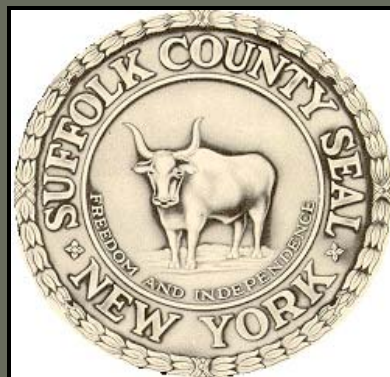


# Self Guided Presentation **Best Management Practices**

For Retail/Wholesale Businesses  
Selling Lawn Fertilizer

Provided by Suffolk County



# UNDERSTANDING

## Best Management Practices

**Best Management Practices** (BMPs) are environmentally safe ways and common sense practices that can reduce the threat that normal activities around homes or businesses can pose to ground and surface water supplies.

These lawn care tips can reduce nitrogen leaching, runoff, and save consumers time and money!



# Tips for Lawn Care

- **Fertilize in Late Spring**

Fertilize the end of April or in the month of May.



- **Focus on Fall Fertility**

Fertilize at the end of summer, or early fall.

This is the best time of year for grass to take up and store food.



- **Avoid Fertilizing in Summer**

When lawns are typically under stress.

# Tips for Lawn Care



## Mow High and keep turf cover dense

Keep your turf at 3" or higher. This means you'll have enough leaf area to provide food for a good root system. A 3" height helps to conserve moisture and shades out weeds.

High density grass means fewer weeds so feel free to overseed.

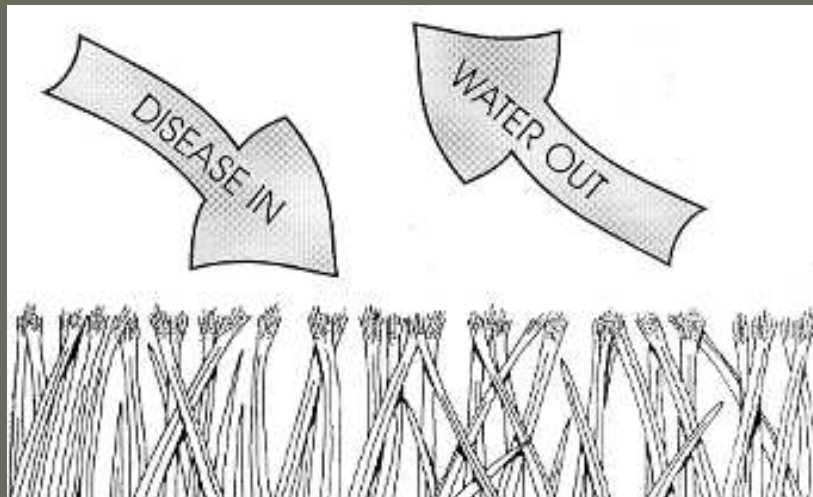
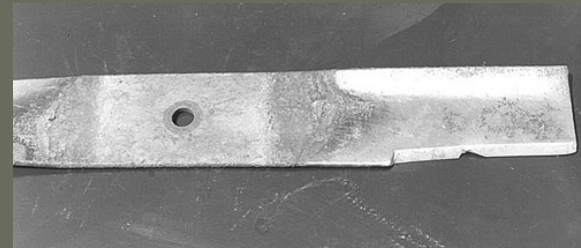


# Tips for Lawn Care

## ❑ Keep Mower Blade Sharp.

A clean cut prevents disease.

Don't mow with a blade like this!



← Results of mowing with a dull blade.

# Tips for Lawn Care

## ❑ Leave Clippings on Lawn

- ❑ They are high quality, free fertilizer and do not contribute to thatch.

**\*Tip:** Do not “de-thatch” your lawn. It damages the roots. Core aerate instead.



- ❑ Keep fertilizer and grass clippings off sidewalks and driveways. This prevents runoff of nutrients into our waterways which can cause nitrate pollution.

# Tips for Lawn Care

## ❑ Core Aerate to reduce compaction.

Compaction can lead to problems for grass such as poor growth and poor use of fertilizer and water.

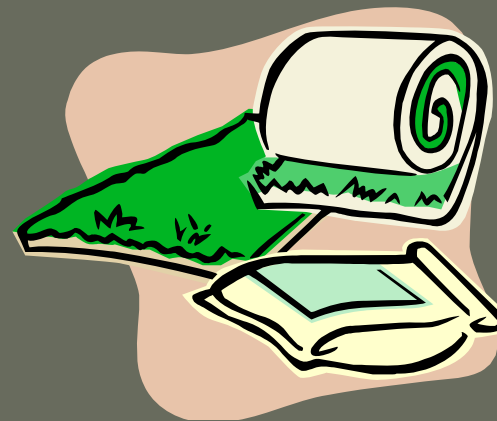
Core aerate to increase water, nutrient and oxygen movement in the soil profile.

# Tips for Lawn Care

- ❑ **Plant the Appropriate Grass mixes for your site.**

Most grasses do better in sun than shade.

Limit the use of Kentucky bluegrass and perennial ryegrass because they require more nitrogen fertilizer.





# Tips for Lawn Care

## ❑ Select the best grass for your specific situation.

- ✓ Dry shade, no traffic: use fine fescue
- ✓ Full sun with traffic: use tall fescue
- ✓ Full sun with no traffic: use tall or fine fescue
- ✓ No sun: avoid the use of lawn grasses, consider the use of ground covers.



Use groundcovers  
wherever possible



Use more fescues or native grasses,  
they require less fertilizer

# Tips for Lawn Care

- ❑ **Test Your Soil pH. Ideal is 6-7. Below this level is acid, and may require lime. Improper pH leads to poor fertilizer use by turf.**

Contact your local  
Cornell Cooperative Extension  
office for complete information  
on soil testing.

Suffolk County 631.727.7850 ext 120



# Tips for Lawn Care

## ❑ Water Properly

- ✓ Lawns usually need about an 1" of water per week during the growing season. Supplement with irrigation *only* when necessary. Avoid overwatering which can lead to nitrogen leaching into the groundwater.
- ✓ Be sure to water to wet the soil where the roots grow, to about a 4"- 6" depth. Avoid frequent shallow watering which does not encourage good root growth or turf health.
- ✓ Water between midnight and 8:00 am to prevent prolonged periods of wet grass and water no more than 3 times per week.

# Tips for Lawn Care

- ❑ Be sure to calibrate your spreader.

How do you know if your spreader is applying too much or too little fertilizer?

- ❑ See the “simple spreader calibration” PowerPoint presentation found on this CD.



- ❑ Individual applications of nitrogen should not exceed 1lb/1000 sq. ft. and should total no more than 2-3lbs of nitrogen per 1000 sq. ft. per year.

# Want to know more?

- Visit Suffolk County's websites:  
<http://healthylawns.suffolkcountyny.gov> or go to  
<http://www.suffolkcountyny.gov/Departments/EconomicDevelopmentandPlanning/WaterQualityImprovement/FertilizerReductionInitiative.aspx>
- Visit Cornell Cooperative Extension of Suffolk County's website:  
<http://www.ccesuffolk.org>  
or call **631.727.7850**
- Visit Cornell University's website:  
<http://blogs.cornell.edu/horticulture/>