



Miller Lawns, located at 168 W. Broadway in Hoisington, is proud to announce their new spray applicator, Chase Penka. He is the son of Brian and Angel Penka and a 2014 graduate of Larned High School. He will be a friendly face that you all know and trust and is excited to service his hometown area.

# Weeding through lawncare service options

Millions of acres across North America are devoted to lush, green lawns. According to Duke University’s Nicholas School of the Environment, lawns take up 40.5 million acres and individuals spend \$30 billion on average for lawn and garden upkeep in the United States alone. People certainly love their lawns and often wonder if those lawns are best left in the hands of professionals.

The National Gardening Association states that 72 percent of American households do some work in their yards. However, a growing number of homeowners also hire others to make their lawns look pristine. Homeowners who want to leave lawncare to the professionals can consider the following factors as they search for a company that best suits their needs.

- Work with a licensed and insured company. Lawncare services that are licensed and insured provide more peace of mind to homeowners than the alternatives. Should an injury occur on your property while work is being done, an insured business will be able to take care of it and you won’t be liable.
- Ask about membership in a professional or trade organization. Businesses that belong to an organization invest in continually learning about the evolution of lawncare. This increases the likelihood that member companies will be up-to-date regarding the latest, most environmentally friendly lawncare techniques. Participation in a trade organization also may indicate education in the landscaping field.
- Research reviews before hiring. Although public reviews may not paint the entire picture and they often reflect only the very positive or very negative experiences previous customers have had with a given business, they can provide an idea of how a lawncare company interacts with its customers. Prospective customers who contact the Better Business Bureau may learn if there have been any glaring complaints against a particular contractor.
- Find out which services are offered. Ask each business what services they provide. While nearly every lawncare contractor will mow the lawn and trim shrubs, many homeowners prefer companies that can adapt when the yard needs a change. This may include pest treatments, fertilization, aeration, and seasonal cleanups.
- Look for a company that’s organized and connected. Customer service should be a factor when choosing a lawncare service. You want to be able to reach the company promptly. A company that responds quickly is ideal, especially if you need to change a service or need to inquire about additional or emergency work.

Shopping for a lawncare service can take time and effort, but the results will be well worth it when homeowners have lawns and landscapes that make their neighbors green with envy.

## Did you know?

According to the Penn State Department of Plant Science, thatch is a loose and intermingled organic layer of both dead and living shoots, stems and roots that develops between the zone of green vegetation and the soil surface. While leaf clippings may be found in a thatch layer, they do not typically contribute to thatch buildup because clippings are easily broken down by microorganisms in the soil. While some homeowners may only know thatch as a threat they must periodically address by aerating their soil, thatch can benefit turf depending on the amount of it that is present. For example, a layer of thatch that is 1/2-inch or less can insulate the turf from extreme temperatures and fluctuations in soil moisture. But it’s important that homeowners address thatch before it gets too thick, as excess thatch can harbor disease-causing organisms and insects.

# Bring Your Yard to Life!

*Services Offered:*

- Fertilizing & Weed Control - Power Raking - Aeration
- Lawn Seeding - Sterilant

## MILLER LAWN

Where the Green Grass Grows

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168 W Broadway, Hoisington, KS 67544

# Shade-tolerant plants help to complete landscapes

Plants need sunlight to thrive and grow, but some need less sunlight than others. People who find their landscapes are less supportive to sun-loving plants can choose from a variety of shade-tolerant plants, shrubs and trees.

Shade tolerance refers to a plant’s ability to withstand low levels of light. Certain plants have adapted this feature to survive in the wild. Plants that grow at the base of forest floors, for example, will get less sunlight than others outside of the tree canopy. Such adaptations enable a wide variety of foliage to grow even though they are not exposed to much sunlight.

While sun-loving plants often have broad leaves and expend significant energy to capture sunlight for photosynthesis, shade-tolerant plants expend less energy and tend to be more efficient consumers of soil nutrients and sunlight.

Penn State Extension’s Plant and Pests division says the amount of shade a plant is growing under will directly affect the density of the foliage and the plant’s flowering and fruiting characteristics. Blending shade-tolerant plants into the landscape can be an effective use of space. Before choosing plants for an existing landscape, it’s important to assess the level of shade or sun the plants will receive.

- **Heavy shade:** Heavy shade is when no direct sunlight reaches a plant. This occurs at the base of northern-facing walls or beneath thick tree canopies.
- **Full sun:** Areas that receive full sun enjoy direct sunlight between six and eight hours per day.
- **Moderate shade:** These sites have reflected sunlight that may come off of water features.
- **Light shade:** Plants in these areas will get partially filtered or dappled sunlight.

Once homeowners understand which type of shade they are dealing with, they can then visit plant nurseries and select their plants. Most greenery comes with care instructions that include recommendations regarding the amount of shade/sunlight the plant will need to do well. If further assistance is needed, a knowledgeable employee can make suggestions based on landscape needs.

Those who are looking for some preliminary guidance when it comes to selecting shade-tolerant shrubs, plants or trees can consult the following list.

- **Bleeding heart:** Bleeding heart, or *Dicentra spectabilis*, is typically found in woodlands. It’s a perennial in the poppy family that produces mounded foliage and arching vine-like stems of heart-shaped flowers in the spring.
- **Amethyst flower:** *Browallia* hybrids offer star-shaped blooms of blue and violet. These plants will billow out of hanging baskets or containers, and they prefer warm shade or filtered sunlight.
- **Coleus:** The coleus, *Solenostemon scutellarioides*, is another perennial that can have a variety of different leaf colors and striations.
- **Witch hazels:** These are a genus in the family Hamamelidaceae, which has four different species in North America. This shrub or small tree features arching branches with dense, multi-stemmed clumps. Witch hazel produces flowers in the late autumn when most other plants are sparse.
- **Bayberry:** *Myrica pensylvanica* can grow in partial shade as a hedge or natural property divider. The leaves of this shrub are aromatic when crushed. The shrub will produce tiny, gray/white fruits in late summer.
- **English Ivy:** Also known as *Hedera helix*, this trailing plant is widely cultivated as an ornamental plant. It will spread easily and can become invasive.

Those searching for shade-tolerant trees can choose among Sugar maple, Black alder, Flowering dogwood, and White spruce, among others.

Shade-tolerant plants can make welcome additions to the landscape, offering greenery and color in the darker areas of a property.



Shade-tolerant plants, such as coleus, can add color and appeal to shady areas of a landscape.

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