



How lawns benefit from aeration

Compacted soil can have a dramatic effect on grass. Compacted soil blocks oxygen, water and nutrients from reaching the root systems of the turf. That creates a lawn with weak roots, which make grass more vulnerable to disease and compromising its ability to withstand harsh weather, such as summer heat. The buildup of thatch, which is a matted layer of grass clippings and other organic debris that collects on the top of

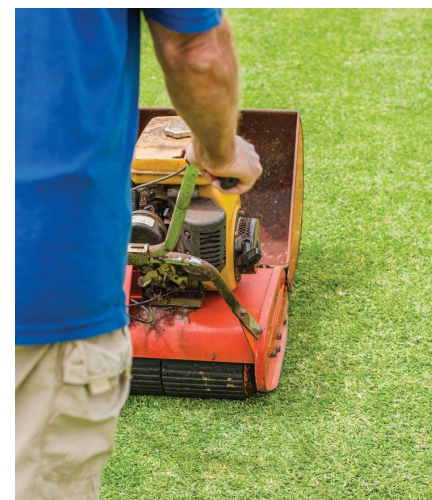
the soil, is one indicator that a lawn could benefit from aeration, a process in which the surface of the lawn is perforated to break up compacted soil and allow oxygen, water and nutrients to reach root systems. Other signs that aeration may be necessary include patches of thin grass, brown spots and a high concentration of clay in the soil. When faced with a lawn that could benefit from aeration, homeowners may wonder if such a task lends itself to DIY or if it's best left to professional landscapers. Aerating a lawn is not always easy, and typically it involves the use of one of three types of aerators:

Core aerator: A core aerator uses hollow tines to pull plugs of soil from the lawn. The plugs are left on the surface of the lawn. Homeowners can pick up the plugs or, according to the grass

seed experts at Pennington, even leave them in the yard and allow them to break down.

Spike aerator: The experts at Pennington note that spike aerators employ solid, spike-like tines to poke holes in the soil. These aerators leave the spikes in the soil. Some people wear spiked aeration shoes while walking around the yard to mimic the effects of spike aerators.

Slicing aerator: According to Pennington, slicing aerators employ rotating blades that slice through thatch and down into the soil. These aerators leave the soil in the ground. Aerators can be operated manually, though professionals tend to use motorized aerators. The machines are often heavy, so homeowners should consider their health and physical ability before deciding to aerate on their own.



Hiring a professional landscaper who has experience aerating may be the quickest and most effective way to restore a lawn to full health.


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Did you know?

Many people may be tempted to discard rusty tools that have gone unused for a significant period of time. But tools encrusted with rust do not need to be relegated to the trash bin, nor do gardeners have to toil for hours scraping and sanding off the rust. There's a much easier way to restore rusty tools that relies on a common household ingredient: vinegar. Pour vinegar into a deep enough vessel to submerge the metal part of the tool. Soak the tool overnight. The next day, use a scouring pad to rub off the rust. If the tool is too big to fit into a can or bucket, wrap it with a vinegar-soaked rag and cover the whole tool with a tightly secured plastic bag. Do the same the next day. After all the rust is gone, rinse the tool in cool water and dry thoroughly.