

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 pro-

cess 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 typi-

cally 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.

Did you know?

Spring cleaning is a ritual in many homes, though some might be forgetting to address an area of their homes that can be especially vulnerable to insect infestations.

According to PestWorld.org, kitchen cabinets and pantries used to store spices and baking items, such as flour, can make for inviting hideouts for various types of pests.

These unwelcome guests include beetles, Indian meal moths and ants.

To remedy this issue or prevent insects from becoming an issue, discard stale spices or dated baking items.

Once such items have been removed from the cabinets and pantry and discarded, wipe down the interior of the spaces before installing fresh shelf paper.

If the critters didn't make their presence known in the cabinets, that doesn't mean they haven't made your kitchen home over the winter.

Some might have opted to spend their winters behind appliances, including the stove and the refrigerator.

As a result, it's best to pull these appliances off the wall each spring, sweeping or vacuuming the dust and crumbs you find before mopping the floors.



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