

**DIY Organic Lawn Care**

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**For More Info**



 **SCAN ME**

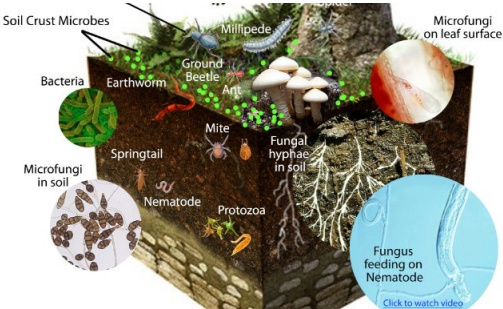
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**Who am I?**



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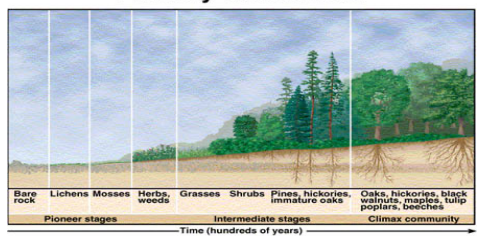
**Start With the Soil**



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## Arrested Development

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**Primary succession**



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## Root-feeding Nematode

- Fungal Hyphae ensnaring a root feeding Nematode to keep it from root
- Fungi can act as a “smart root” by forming symbiotic relationship with perennials



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## Kentucky Blue Grass is from Asia



- Lawn grass species are not native to North America.
- Grasses evolved in climates like England
- Hardiness zones 6-9 and double our rainfall

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## What Grass Needs

- **Light**
- **Water**
- **Food**



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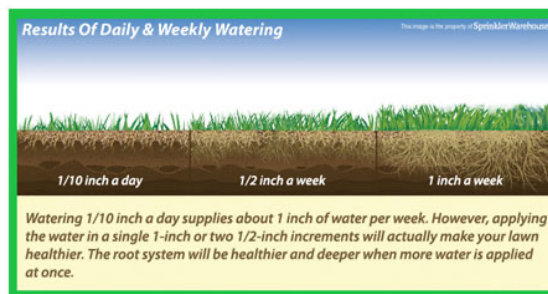
## 4 Hours of Sun



- This is what “shade” grasses need to be thick and healthy enough to keep out weeds.
- Creeping Charlie starts on bare soil in shade.

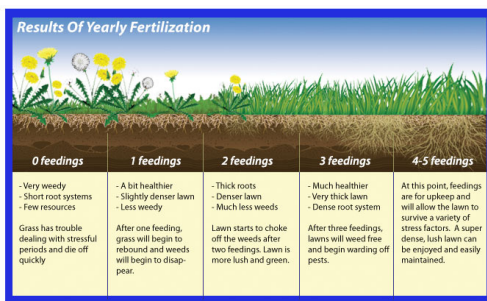
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## Correct Watering



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## Good Organic Food



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## Drought Damage

- Large brown areas indicate stress
- Root death thins out lawn
- Look for it in areas with full sun



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### What happens in a drought?

- Grass goes dormant
- Microbes close soil pores
- Soils become hydrophobic
- Exposed soil heats and dries out
- Weeds that like hot and dry appear
- Don't mow
- Wet soil, wait, then water
- Slow, deep watering
- Don't mow
- Follow an organic program

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### Drought Recovery/Repair

- Mow short and bag clippings to expose soil
- Slit seed with low maintenance seed blend, fertilize and top dress with quality compost before mid May
- Pull weeds or treat with Weed Slayer before seeding
- Water up to 1"/week including rain
- Mow 3" or higher and not at all during drought
- Raise blade to get weed heads

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### Slit Seeder

- Great for drought repair
- Available at most rental stores
- Good seed to soil contact.
- There will be debris to rake up afterwards



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### How to Slit Seed

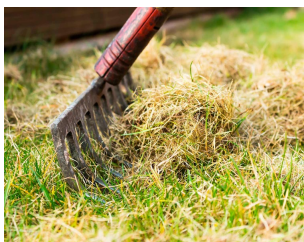
- Apply half of seed going north and south, half going east and west
- Save a little seed for areas machine can't reach



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## Manual Seeding

- Mow short and bag clippings to let light in
- Use a hard rake to expose soil and remove debris
- Apply seed, fertilizer and compost
- Water in.



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## What kind of grass seed?

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Fine Fescue</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Half the water and 2/3 the fertilizer of Kentucky blue grass</li> <li>• If you don't mow, it takes ¼ fertilizer and no water</li> <li>• Names like No Mow, Low Grow, Eco Lawn</li> </ul> | <p><b>Tall Fescue</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Looks like Kentucky blue grass</li> <li>• Less water and fertilizer</li> <li>• 30" deep roots</li> </ul> |
|---|---|

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## Top dressing

- 140 # quality compost/ 1000 sq. ft. or 520# for renovation.
- Good brands are Hsu's, Cowsmo, Soil Essentials Premium Compost
- Apply spring and fall in first year
- DO NOT use city compost



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## Fertilizer

- Use phosphorus free unless starting from bare soil
- Phosphorus is middle number
- Look for organic Certification seal
- Do not use Milorganite



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## A Plan For Problems

Pests  
Diseases  
Weeds



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## Grubs!



- Milky Spore Disease affects only Japanese Beetle grubs.
- Grub Gone treats all grubs

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## Organic Grub Control

- Deals with about 12 different kinds of grubs
- Certified organic
- Apply once to achieve maximum control
- Have a product for beetles too.



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## What weeds indicate

- Weeds are caused by soil problems
- Heal the soil for a healthy lawn



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## Crabgrass

- Likes hot, dry, sandy, even salty soil
- Pull or rake large patches, add compost, reseed, fertilize and water.
- Mow 3" high and follow our organic program



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## Creeping Charlie

- Imported !!
- Starts on bare soil in shade
- Sign of pH imbalance & calcium deficiency



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## Dandelion

- taproot fractures compaction and gathers nutrients from deeper soil & deposits on top



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## Weed Therapy

- Use de-thatching rake to remove weeds or hand pull
- Deep aerate with shovel.
- Top dress with 400 lbs. compost / 1000 sq ft (1/2 cu yd)
- Over-seed with Fine Fescue blend.
- Apply organic fertilizer
- DIY YouTube videos at [www.organicbob.com](http://www.organicbob.com)

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## Fiesta

- Very low toxicity
- Safe for aquatic invertebrates
- 3 applications 3 weeks apart when creeping Charlie is blooming
- Kills all broadleaf weeds



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## The Most Organic Lawn



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## Replacement

- Remove vegetation and debris.
- Till in quality compost.
- Grade soil, avoid compaction.
- Apply starter fertilizer.
- Sow seed or lay sod.
- Water until turf is established.

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## Before and After Seed



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## Renovate

- Mow short and bag clippings
- Deep aerate by hand or machine
- Top-dress with quality compost.
- Correct fertilizer.
- Grass seed blend.
- Best time is late August through mid September
- Next best time is April through mid May
- Can dormant seed in late Oct to mid Nov

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## Weed Slayer

- Organic non-selective
- Kills everything
- Active ingredients  
clove oil, molasses,  
bacterium
- Will be re-certified  
soon
- Use it to kill  
everything and start  
over



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## Monthly Program

- April – Over seed at 2#/1000 sq ft, 150# to 450# quality compost / 1000 sq ft
- May - half application of fertilizer
- June – Hand weed and lightly seed the empty spots.
- July - It's too hot. Just water.
- August- Core aerate, over seed at 2#/1000 sq ft, a half application of fertilizer, 150# quality compost / 1000 sq ft
- Sept. – A full application fertilizer.
- Oct. – Water until hard freeze.

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## A Grass Garden

- Water 1 inch per week.
- Mow 3 inches or higher.
- Mulch grass clippings.
- Keep mower blade sharp.
- Follow an organic program.

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## What to Expect

- Takes up to 2 years for weed control, IF program is followed.
- Be ready, able, and willing, to supplement up to 1 inch water per week.
- Year 1 – Grass is thicker, greener, healthier
- Year 2 – Fewer weeds, more grass.
- Year 3 – Back off on watering, fertilizer, top dressing, over seeding.

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## 3 Year DIY Lawn



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## No Mow Fescue

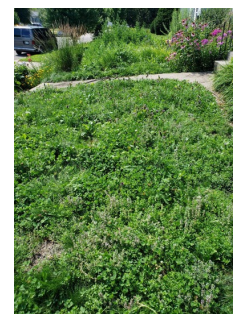
- A blend of fine fescues that were selected especially for MN
- Mow once or twice a year
- 1/6 fertilizer of bluegrass
- Needs very little water once established
- You can mow it if you want.



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## Bee Lawn

- A blend of fine fescues, creeping thyme, self heal, and Dutch white clover
- Helps a wide variety of bees
- Developed by U of M Bee Lab



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## Product Resources

- **Fertilizer** Look for organic certification seal. Only need ½ application in spring and 1 ½ in fall.
- **Seed** Use quality seed from a reputable supplier
- **Compost** Look for organic certification. DON'T use municipal or homemade. Weed seeds.
- **Herbicide** There is no organic herbicide that won't also kill grass.

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## More Products

- Grub Gone at [greenearthagandturf.com](http://greenearthagandturf.com)
- Weed Slayer at [allstatesorganicsupply.com](http://allstatesorganicsupply.com)
- Fiesta Herbicide at Gertens and Amazon
- Ringer fertilizer
- Cowsmo compost bulk and bagged
- Mississippi Topsoils Premium Compost bagged

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## Info Resources

- “The Organic Lawn Care Manual” by Paul Tukey
- [www.pasquedesign.com](http://www.pasquedesign.com) Native plant landscape design
- [www.organicbob.com](http://www.organicbob.com) Organic lawn Care info, products and services
- [www.bluethumb.org](http://www.bluethumb.org) Rain garden and alternative turf resources

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## For More Info



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**We can live with it**



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