

# Lawn Maintenance Guide

\* **Don't use chemical fertilizers or herbicides on your lawn.** They kill microbes in the soil and drive off earthworms and other useful soil critters.

\* **Mow regularly.** Cut to the highest recommended height for your grass variety. Keep the mower blades sharp to avoid ripping the grass.

\* **Leave the grass clippings.** They add nitrogen back to the lawn. Thatch is not a buildup of grass clippings as many suppose. It is due to the use of chemical fertilizers and their detrimental effect on soil life and tilth.

\* **Water deeply when dry.** Infrequent, deep waterings create deep-rooted grass that is able to withstand some drought. Water once every week or two when the weather is warm and

sunny and there has been less than an inch of rain. Always water early in the morning.

\* **Hand weed when needed.** A thick, healthy lawn kept at 2-3" tall will shade and crowd out most weeds.

\* **Top dress every year or so.**

Broadcast a half inch layer of fine, screened organic matter (compost or aged manure) over the lawn in the fall.

\* **Aerate older lawns every 3 to 4 years if needed** - with a machine that removes plugs of soil. Top dress with compost or manure as usual. Water well.

\* **Test soil pH every two years and spread lime as needed to sweeten soil.** This step alone will often release nutrients bound up by the acidity in the soil.

