

ASK TOM

Lawn Tips

By Tom Mrakas

As this was the long weekend and the first real opportunity to do a proper yard clean up, I thought I'd write about something that's an important part of home maintenance but that is not really a strong suit of mine: lawn care.

I have had a number of readers ask recently about lawn care and given that we are now in the annual phase I water ban ? how to keep the lawn looking full and green in Aurora.

Well, just like most things in life, success depends on preparation.

The first tip I have to offer is a bit late, but keep it in mind for next year. Get the right fertilizer to use in the fall, and use it liberally but not as liberally as the manufacturers promote. Put too much down and you'll end up with a burnt lawn, not a prepped lawn.

Also, as fertilizer promotes rapid growth if you use it improperly - too much or too often - that can lead to more problems with your lawn and shrubs, such as disease and insects. A fall fertilizing is all that is needed.

What you can do right now and have an immediate effect on the look of your lawn is to resist the urge to mow it right down to putting green height and instead start mowing your lawn at a higher setting such as 3.5 inches to 4 inches.

Tall grass shades out weeds, keeps soil cooler and moist longer and it also promotes deeper root penetration.

The biggest issue most have is watering ? too much, not too little! Unless it's newly laid sod or shrubs, a healthy lawn only needs to be watered once or twice a week at the most for one hour a time! Honestly, that's all that's needed. Watering it every day just isn't necessary.

Another trick I use in keeping the lawn looking nice and green (and yes, it is a ?sustainable landscaping? trick that my other half suggested) is to use clover seed.

Clover grows quickly and easily. Once grown, it can be cut like grass. It makes the lawn look full, it stays green and doesn't need much, if any, water to grow.

Even in the midst of a mid-summer phase II water ban, with a lawn full of clover it will still look green while your neighbors' all turn brown ? and they turn ?green? with envy!

These are a few quick tips for you to make your lawn look great.

If I missed something or someone with a green thumb has something to add let me know. I'm always happy to learn something new!

Until next week, remember a good job, is a job well done! Also, if you have any questions you can reach me at www.facebook.com/anastasisdesign or on twitter, @ADesign_build and email, of course, at Anastasis@anastasisdesign.ca.