Meehan's Brookside LAWN SERVICE

MANAGING THATCH

A HEALTHY LAWN STARTS BELOW THE SURFACE!

WHAT IS THATCH?

Every lawn has some thatch. It is when a lawn has too much thatch that problems occur. Thatch is the layer of living and dead organic material that lies on top of the soil. It is made up of surface roots, stems and crowns of grass plants. Studies have shown that grass clippings left on the lawn do not increase thatch.



WHY THATCH CAN BE A PROBLEM

When thatch accumulates to over ½ inch it becomes a problem. The layer of thatch prevents water, air, and fertilizer from reaching the soil and grass roots. Lawns with heavy thatch will often suffer severe damage during periods of hot and/or dry weather.



SOLUTIONS TO THATCH

The best cure for thatch is to prevent buildup in the first place. If a lawn has less than ½ inch of thatch, the lawn should be aerated once a year to keep the thatch from building up. If a lawn has more than ½ inch of thatch there are two options:



OPTION ONE – RENOVATION

This is the process of scraping off the existing grass and thatch with a sod cutter, cultivate the soil, add soil as necessary, level off the area, and reseed. This is the quickest solution and has the benefit of using the latest cultivars of turf.



OPTION TWO – MULTIPLE AERATIONS PER SEASON

The second way is to aerate the lawn twice per year. In cases of thatch over ¾ inch the lawn should be aerated twice in the spring and twice in the fall for two years to get the thatch layer under control. During the fall aerations is a great time to overseed and improve the lawn with the latest cultivars of turf.



SODDED LAWNS

Sodded lawns offer the benefit of instant grass, but the sod comes with thick thatch. The growers of sod fertilize heavily every two to three weeks. This brings the sod to the point it can be harvested quickly and it holds together. Sodded lawns are prone to the problems discussed. Sodded lawns will need the multiple aerations per season to bring the thatch under control.



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