



Environmentally Sound Practices for Sandy Soils in Shade

Turfgrass Quality Expectations.....		
	Minimal	Average	High
Water	During first growing season after seeding or sodding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ½ inch per week of rain or water ▪ Sandy soils lose water fast. Water more often & with less water to reduce water loss through the soils. ▪ Do not over water after applying pesticides or fertilizers. These can be dissolved & directed through the soils into the ground water. ▪ Grass does not need to be dark green to be healthy. If your footprints show or if it turns a blue-gray color this indicates time to water. ▪ During first growing season after seeding or sodding 	X
Conserve Water	No action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Calibrate irrigation systems ▪ Watering in sandy soils requires more watering events with less water each time. Try to get enough water to help the plant but not too much to soak into the soils beyond the plants roots & disappear. ▪ Avoid creating constantly damp or wet soils, let it dry out ▪ Water during coolest part of day. Early morning is best ▪ Water with large drops, close to the ground to reduce evaporation ▪ Install rain & soil moisture sensor on irrigation systems ▪ Adjust sprinklers. Do not allow water to land on hard surfaces ▪ Follow City watering bans 	X
Mower Height3+ inches with sharp blade.....		X
ClippingsLeave on lawn*, sweep off street.....		X
Leaves	Mow. If turfgrass is not visible through the leaf cover then rake prior to mowing.		X
Core aerate	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Every few years in fall. ▪ 20 – 40 holes per sq/ft*. ▪ Not when ground is dry, grass is stressed or temps are hot or predicted hot within a week. Aeration is not as needed in sandy soils yet still a good practice for managing thatch build up. 	X
Seed Type	Shady mix of perennial fine fescues & shade tolerant Kentucky bluegrasses		X
Seeding Time	Best: mid-August – mid-September, Next best: early spring. Avoid seeding mid-May through July		X
Traffic ToleranceLow.....		X

X – Not Practical

* - for more information see DETAIL PAGE



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Weed control	None. Where turfgrass is very thin, mix in shade loving plants* to prevent soil erosion. Mow to make weeds less obvious.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Follow pesticide labels; they are the law. ▪ Sandy soils can direct dissolved pesticides through the soils into our ground water. Be extra careful to not over apply herbicides. Also take care with lawnmower gas, oil, solvents & other chemicals. ▪ Minimal, spot treatment if any. Use of herbicides cause bare spots that may fill in with weeds due to the poor conditions for growing turfgrass ▪ Bare spots: Light shade, reseed with a shady lawn. Heavier shade, consider mulches or adding shade loving plants* for a better adapted & often dense ground cover. Turfgrass is poorly adapted to dense shade ▪ Avoid use of weed/feed mixes as the needs & timing for weed control may be different from that of supplying nutrients. This will also help avoid herbicide injury to other nearby desirable plants ▪ Minimize broadleaf herbicide, reduce injury to trees, shrubs & other desirable plants ▪ Option: Mow to make weeds less obvious. 		X
Fertilizer tips	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Granular: Use drop spreader by edges. Fill spreader on dry hard surface, spills can be swept up. ▪ Liquid: fill on grassy area. Dilute spills on grass with thorough watering ▪ Apply in cross pattern, ½ ↑ direction, ½ → direction 		X
Correct fertilizerTake soil test, follow recommendations for fertilizer use.....			X
Next best fertilizer	½ - 1 lb N per 1000 sq/ft yearly, Labor Day (35-50% to be slow release N *)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Once a year near Labor Day, 1 pound Nitrogen (N) per 1000 sq/ft (35-50% of the N should be slow release*) ▪ Optional: 2nd application around Halloween of ¾ - 1 pound N per 1000 sq/ft (100% quick release N, with ¼ - ½ inch water). This will encourage good spring green up & growth without more N in the spring ▪ Typically a N-P-K ration of 4-0-2 or 4-0-3 is ok for MN ▪ Law requires 0% phosphorus (P)* 		X
Trees	No action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leaf trees: Often best recommendations for tree health conflicts with best recommendations for turfgrass health. ▪ For turfgrass health: Thin branches to gain more filtered sunlight, remove lower branches to promote air circulation near ground & ease mowing. Consider mulching under tree canopy to keep mowers away from trunk & exposed roots. ▪ Needle trees: Do not remove lower branches. Mow around tree. Consider mulching under tree branches. 		X

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