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Common to all sites:

* Concentrate on growing healthier turfgrass thereby reducing the need for herbicides & naturally allowing for better recovery from damage caused by insects or diseases. Healthy turf chokes weeds.

* Watering frequency may need to increase with hot temperatures, particularly during dry periods.

* Leave clippings on lawn unless grass is very long and thick or in wet clumps. This will provide the equivalent to 1 lb N per/1000 sq/ft per year.

* Law requires 0 Phosphorus fertilizers unless soil test shows a need or if you are establishing new turf.

*Use slow-release nitrogen fertilizers as they provide a more even supply of available plant N & hence turfgrass growth is more uniform, which in turn reduces mowing & plant water demands.

*Avoid applying N while spring soils are still very cold (less than 45 degree F.) It is harder for plants to absorb soil N in these very cold soils thus making unused N more vulnerable to leaching losses while not providing a plant benefit.

*Slow release Nitrogen might be labeled under any of these names: sulfur-coated urea, polymer coated urea, polymer sulfur coated urea, isobutylidene diurea (IBDU), Methylene ureas, ureaformaldehyde & organic or natural sources of N (such as activated sewage sludge, animal manures, corn gluten meal), water insoluble Nitrogen

* Pale green turfgrass needs Nitrogen

* Compacted soils: a soil probe/screw driver cannot easily penetrate the soils beneath the sod layer.

* Core aeration will require more than one pass to get 20-40 holes per sq/ft

* The grass plant life cycle starts in late summer, setting new roots & shoots in preparation for spring growth & bloom. Early to mid-summer is the least active part of the grass cycle, grass is thin & somewhat inactive. It is not unusual for lawns to look thinner & less dense during mid-summer. This is also the time of year when our turfgrass root systems are at their shallowest depth of the growing season.

* Fall season, broad leaf herbicide treatments are most effective since the plants energy is going down to the roots thus the plant is most likely to die. During the spring & summer plants energy is going up towards growth or bloom.

* Mow less frequently during long dry spells. Mowing extremely dry brittle grass causes stress and harm where tires run

* Follow pesticide labels. They are the law.

Created by Fortin Consulting for the MWMO as a part of the MPCA Voluntary Certification Program.
Advised by technical expert committee members from: University of MN Extension, MN Department of Agriculture, Wayzata Schools, University of MN Property Services, City of White Bear Lake, TruGreen Corporation, Heidi's Lifestyle Gardens, Organic Bob, Minneapolis Park Board, City of St. Anthony, Tessman Seed, Inc., CTAP, Quercus Landscapes, MPCA, MWMO and Fortin Consulting, Inc.

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Sunny sites only:

*Most of our problem grasses are annual grasses & an application of a pre-emergent herbicide in the spring will prevent the seeds from growing & emerging from the ground. However, total turfgrass treatment of a pre-emergent is rarely needed. Most problem areas are by driveway edges, curb edges & areas where turfgrass is not healthy & thick. Always try to determine why turfgrass is not doing well in an area before trying to rely solely on herbicides for controlling the weeds. That is, try to (re)create favorable growing conditions for the turfgrass such that it can successfully compete with potential weed invaders.

*Late fall (Halloween) fertilizer gets N into plant for winter nutrition & improved spring green color & growth.

*If you use a pre-emergent with the early fertilizer wait until soils are closer to 60°F or your pre-emergent will not be productive. It is difficult for grass seed to germinate in cold soils.

Shady sites only:

* High quality expectations for shaded areas should be viewed with caution. Depending on intensity & duration of shade, it may or may not be practical to grow turfgrass at all in those areas. In situations where shade is filtered as from trees & some sunlight actually reaches the ground, it is possible to maintain an average to minimally acceptable lawn cover. However, the thick dense nature of a lawn grown in full sunlight is not achievable under shady conditions. Also, this section assumes shade to be that of tree shade & not shade as found on the north side of buildings.

*Shade loving ground cover plants: Native plants (such as woodland strawberry, violets, woodland geranium, Virginia waterleaf, Jacobs ladder, sedges)

Sandy sites only:

* Sandy soils are good conduits for dissolved nutrients & toxins. Be extra careful to not over apply fertilizers & herbicides. Also take care with lawnmower gas, oil, solvents & other chemicals that may be on site.

* Sandy soils dry out fast in hot, dry summer months. Leave grass longer to provide shade and keep moisture in.

*Caution: Do not over apply N on sandy soils: Nitrogen is water soluble & when applied on sandy soils, extra N that the plants do not use will be directed to the groundwater. High nitrogen levels in ground water causes human health problems.

* Watering in sandy soils required more watering events with less water each time. Attempt to get enough water to help the plant but not too much to soak into the soils & disappear.

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