

Fall Lawn Care Tips

Fall...the heat of summer has finally relented, but the days are still warm. Nights are cool, clear, and crisp. Every day, colors get more intense, building to a dazzling display that leaves everyone wondering if this fall was the best ever.

School is back in session and football season has begun. Kids are excited as Halloween approaches, and the great unifying American tradition of Thanksgiving isn't far off. After that is the anticipation of Christmas and the promise it brings.

It's no surprise that a lot of people cite fall as their favorite season!

But before you bed down for the sweet silence of winter, think about your lawn.

Your lawn isn't as ready as you are to kick back in front of the fire and enjoy some well-earned rest.

Actually, it's still a prime time for growth and fortification. For some lawns, especially newly seeded ones, it's even a make-or-break time.

So let's talk about why fall is just as important a time for lawn care as spring and summer are, and let's talk about what your lawn needs ahead of its long winter's nap.

Get Rid of All Those Fallen Leaves

The colorful leaves of autumn are one of the season's highlights for sure, and they can look just as beautiful on the ground as they do on the branches. However, that colorful carpet the kids might be having fun rolling or jumping in isn't good for your lawn.

The problem is that those fallen leaves don't let light through and prevent moisture underneath from drying out. This is a vicious combination for the grass below, and it can be fatal.

To avoid this, it's important to remove fallen leaves on a regular basis by raking them up or blowing them away. When the leaves have finished falling, it's still necessary to rake because there are places (often in corners) where leaves will pile up due to the wind.

Not removing the leaves results in soggy conditions and decaying matter. Come spring, the grass beneath that decaying later will be dead and you'll have to start over at a time when reseeding isn't ideal.

Raking, blowing, and bagging leaves can take a lot of time over the course of a season, and sometimes it means arranging for special pickups by a trash and recycling service. Most professional lawn-care companies offer this service for you, saving you a lot of time and hassle.

Don't Stop Mowing, and Keep the Correct Height

Grass growth slows during the summer, but it doesn't stop altogether when summer ends. Instead, the growing season continues until the first hard frost. Until that occurs, you'll need to keep mowing your lawn, and you need to make sure you're keeping the grass at the correct height.

For grass, the correct height is what Goldilocks would call "just right." When grass is too short as winter sets in, the roots won't be deep enough and the grass will struggle to survive the cold of winter. On the other hand, when the grass is too high at the onset of winter, it can get matted and become susceptible to snow mold and other types of fungi.

That "just right" height depends on climate and grass type. In the Sioux City region, where we favor cool-season grasses like Kentucky bluegrass and assorted fescues, the proper height for fall is 3.5 inches.

Another benefit to mowing in the fall is that it can help with leaf management. The blades chop up the leaves into a mulch that can help feed the lawn. Of course, this requires managing things in the right amounts; an excessively thick layer of leaf mulch presents the same risks that piled-up leaves do.

Although you don't have to mow a lawn as frequently in the fall as you do in the spring, and although conditions are more pleasant than they are in the summer, it's still a time-consuming task, and having to worry about the proper height adds another layer of hassle. So it's not a surprise that many homeowners find it better to entrust a professional service with this task.

Keep Watering Your Lawn

Because fall usually means more rain and dew and slower evaporation rates, people can think that watering a lawn isn't necessary anymore once fall arrives. That's not always the case, though.

Until the growing season ends, your lawn needs at least 1 inch of water per week. That will ensure that the roots are getting the moisture they need to be strong enough to endure the winter.

Using a rain gauge is a simple way to determine if Mother Nature is delivering your lawn the moisture it requires. Automated sprinkler systems are great ways to make sure watering is regular and sufficient.

Give Your Soil a Makeover

Your soil can get old and tired, and it sometimes needs some freshening up. This is where aeration and dethatching come in.

The thatch is a layer of decaying organic matter between the soil and the top of the grass. It's a natural thing, and it's a good thing in the right amounts, but when it builds up, it can create problems.

When the thatch is too thick, it prevents sunlight, water, and other nutrients from penetrating the soil and reaching the roots. As a result, roots become weaker and grass may die or become vulnerable to weeds and insect pests, and then the problems just multiply until you're stuck with an expensive, ugly mess.

Aeration is a process of managing the thatch and refreshing the soil. During aeration, you create "holes" in the thatch and remove plugs of soil from the lawn. That allows the needed sunlight, water, and other nutrients to get in and do their work. A properly aerated lawn promotes strong root growth that leads to thick, healthy grass, your best defense against weeds and against insects that eat your grass. Fall aeration helps create strong growth ahead of winter so that grass gets off to a great start the following spring.

It's possible to aerate a lawn yourself, but it's a tedious, time-consuming task, and many people prefer to leave this work to professionals.

Feed Your Grass

A slow-release fertilizer applied in the fall is a great way to give your lawn a boost ahead of winter. The extra nutrients fertilization provides (nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium) will strengthen the roots and promote lush growth, protecting the lawn from disease, weeds, pests, and frigid weather.

Right after aeration is a prime time to apply fertilizer to a lawn. Thanks to those holes that the aeration process creates, fertilizer has an easier time reaching the places it needs to get. A slow-release fertilizer also helps fortify the grass against the long, cold Midwestern winter to come.

Other ways of feeding your grass include leaving fallen leaves and grass clippings on the lawn. Remember that too much can be harmful; you're still going to have to remove some or most of your leaves and clippings. If you do decide to use fallen leaves this way, it's best to run over them with your mower blades at their highest setting. This chops the leaves up into a mulch without interfering with proper grass height, the importance of which we covered earlier.

Overseed Your Lawn

"Overseeding" may sound like a bad thing (excessively seeding), but it isn't. In reality, overseeding means planting new grass seeds over the existing turf.

Many people assume that spring is the best time of year to plant new seeds, and that seems logical since it's a time of warming weather, abundant rainfall, and new growth. That's incorrect, however.

Spring overseeding, or reseeding, presents some problems. First, it's a great time for weeds to grow, and new grass usually isn't strong enough to withstand them. Weeds can quickly overtake new grass in the spring, killing it and causing bare spots that just invite more weeds.

The other big problem with spring overseeding is the summer. During the summer, growth slows dramatically as grass conserves nutrients to help it endure the hot temperatures.

Older, well-established grass can handle this, but spring-planted grass simply does not have enough time to get strong enough to take the summer heat. Quite often, that new grass dies, leaving more bare spots that weeds are only too happy to fill in. The problems are even worse when people plant later in the spring after earlier applying a pre-emergent herbicide.

Fall is actually the best time for overseeding. Conditions are great for grass growth, and there are still several weeks of growing time remaining. With a healthy period of fall growth for your new grass, it's ready to go to sleep for the winter. When it wakes back up the following spring, the grass gets off to a great start since it's already established.

Therefore, fall overseeding is the key to establishing a healthy growth cycle for years to come.

Make a Sharp Decision!

Fall lawn management is a lot of work and can take a lot of time. Some people just don't have that time, and some have other things they'd rather do with it.

Sharp Lawn Care has been beautifying and protecting the properties of Sioux City residents for more than 15 years. We can manage all of your fall lawn needs for you, saving you time, headaches, and maybe money as well.

[Get A Free Quote Today!](#)

IMPORTANT: This written material has been prepared based on sources which you provided. Neither Flocksy or the creative who wrote the copy makes any claims whatsoever as to the accuracy of the information contained within, and they are not responsible for any legal or financial difficulty resulting from the use of this written material. We encourage you to review it thoroughly before disseminating it or using it in trade.

SOURCES USED:

<https://www.bandbexterminating.com/blog/fall-lawn-care-tips/>,
<https://www.senske.com/blog/what-lawn-care-should-be-done-in-the-fall/>,
<https://www.farmandfleet.com/blog/5-easy-fall-lawn-care-tips/>,
<https://blog.beazer.com/2018/11/fall-lawn-care-guide-midwest/>,
<https://www.thisoldhouse.com/lawns/21015165/7-lawn-care-musts-for-your-fall-yard>,
<https://www.lawndoctor.com/blog/fall-lawn-care-steps/>